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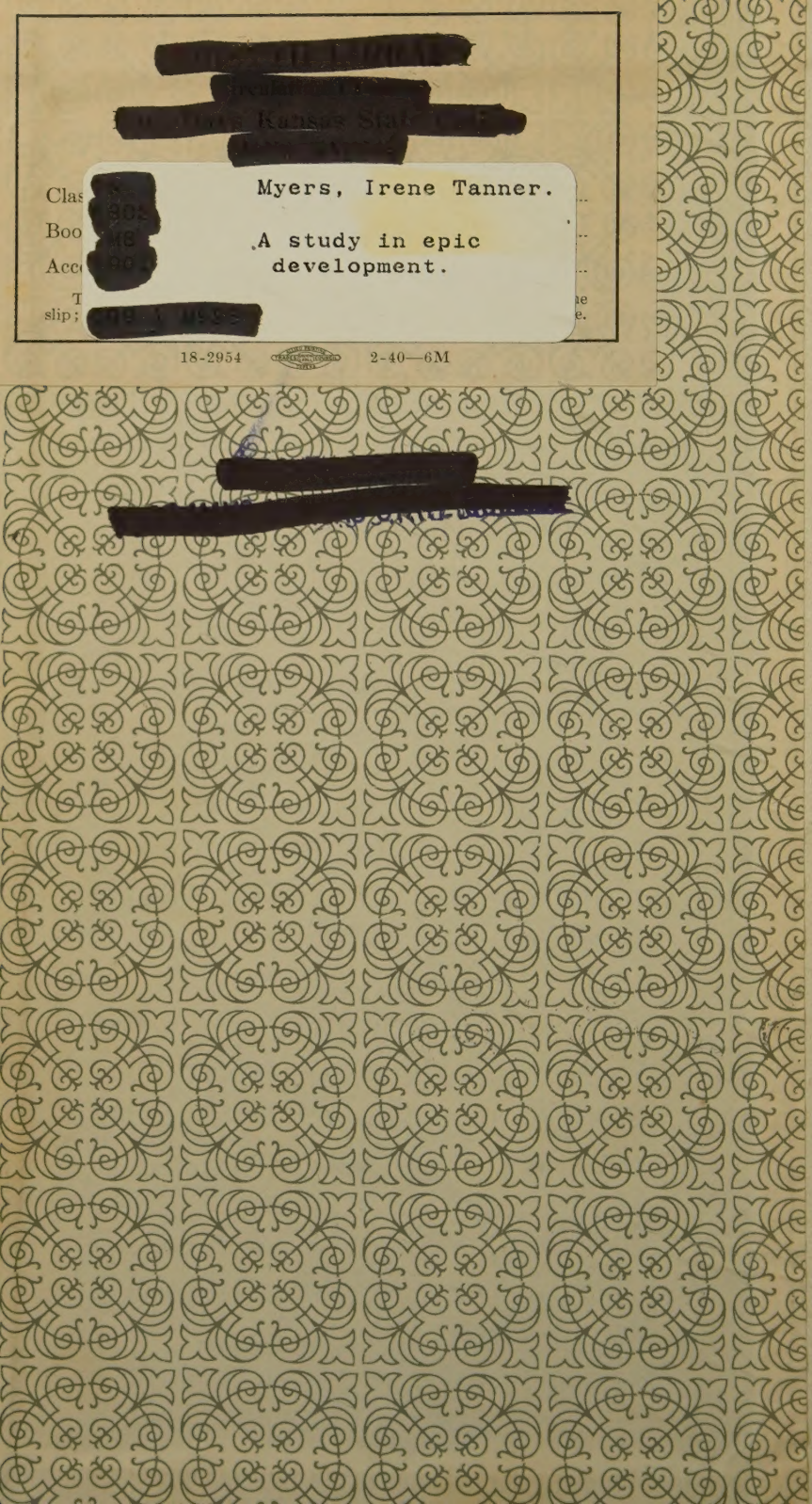

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YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR

XI

# A STUDY IN EPIC DEVELOPMENT

BY

IRENE T. MYERS, PH.D.

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TO

ELISABETH WOODBRIDGE MORRIS

# PREFACE

It is hoped that the title of the thesis here presented—A Study *in* Epic Development—will suggest, what the pages which follow make clear, that a very small portion has been examined of what is implied in a study *of* epic development. I have dealt only with certain of the popular, or semi-popular, epic manifestations, and have tried to correlate and to bring under one view dissociated facts that have to do with early epic production; and, since the people who were evolving certain forms in their orally transmitted narrative were at the same time evolving certain forms in their government, the relation existing between the literature and the contemporary political organization has been emphasized. The material which has been brought together as illustrative has been selected because of its representative character, and in the greater number of cases may be indefinitely supplemented.

It is not necessary, I know, to call attention to the fact that the result attained has been in many ways unsatisfactory; the variety of the material demands a practised hand for its arrangement, and I hope that a deeper philosophy than mine will yet show the informing spirit which makes the epic throughout its development essentially one. The work has been done only by way of beginning a study of the epic; it is the result of my effort to find a starting place; and notwithstanding its deficiencies, it may simplify the struggles of the student who would see this form of literature as a whole. Whether or not this is the case must be left for others to determine.

I. T. M.

Boston, October, 1901.

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# INTRODUCTION

## I. The Theory of Epic Poetry.

### *Greek.*

In the fragmentary discussion of the epic which Aristotle left in his *Poetics* he defines it as 'that poetic imitation which is narrative in form and employs a single metre'; he tells us that 'it should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle, and an end';[1] that 'the beginning and the end must be capable of being brought within a single view';[2] that the characters celebrated should be of a lofty type,[3] and consistently presented;[4] that in the development both of the plot and of the characters the poem should present permanent truths rather than actual realities;[5] and that its subject matter should deal with probable impossibilities rather than improbable possibilities.[6]

These statements are, for the most part, broad in application; they demand, primarily, unity in the plan of the poem and consistency in its development, and at the same time make clear that it is to be no mere reproduction of facts; Aristotle recognizes a difference between nature's actual product and the ideal for which she strives; he believes that the ideal, while frequently transcending the actual, is but the completion of nature's intention, and that, as an expression of the real truth of things, it constitutes the material with which the poet should deal. The critic is not necessarily, because of these principles, to be considered

[1] *Poetics,* xxiii. [2] *Ib.,* xxiv. [3] *Ib.,* v.
[4] *Ib.,* xv. [5] *Ib.,* ix, xv. [6] *Ib.,* xxiv.

an advocate of idealism as opposed to realism, for his real and his ideal may be one, but the conclusion is justifiable that, in his opinion, whenever the real becomes anomalous it ceases to be in the highest sense artistic.

Aristotle based his judgment of poetry upon aesthetic grounds alone; he censured and praised with an eye to the artistic character of a work, and not to its ethical teaching. By so doing he gave substance to a theory that was directly opposed to the prevailing Greek conception, according to which the poet was an inspired teacher whose song held in solution a code of morals. It was the ethical idea alone which had been recognized by Plato,[1] who, when he reasoned that the influence of poetry was hurtful, considered that he took away from it its only excuse for existence; he thought of it as a vehicle for the transmission of morality, but not as an artistic product which accomplished its object by arousing pleasure through its exquisite form.

Both the aesthetic and the ethical conceptions of poetry were transmitted to the later generations of Greeks; thus, according to Strabo (1st century B. C.), Eratosthenes (3d century B. C.) had held that 'the aim of the poet always is to charm the mind, not to instruct';[2] but Strabo himself maintains that poetry is a kind of 'elementary philosophy' designed for 'pleasurable instruction'; and Plutarch,[3] in the same century, emphasizes its ethical purpose. He questions whether young men should not be debarred altogether from reading it, and, since this seems impossible, he contends that every precaution shall be taken to derive from it whatever 'wholesome nourishment' it affords, in order to counteract its disturbing influence. The ethical conception seems, however, to have been the stronger, and in the course of time to have been combined with the principles of Aristotle which deal with poetic structure.

[1] *Rep.*, ii, 377 C, D.

[2] Strabo, i, 2, 3. Cited in Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry*, etc., p. 214.

[3] *Morals*, ii, pp. 43 ff.

These principles had been formulated in accordance with the unwritten laws under which the people had developed a national artistic ideal. In their creations the Greek artists had endeavored to express the typical; while they had idealized, they had not been satisfied simply with the idealization of an individual, but had sought to show in the individual the characteristics that were universal. At the same time, the types they created were preëminently human; the perfection towards which they aspired was a perfected humanity; they developed the spiritual, but not beyond the possibility of expression in the material. Their sculpture, as well as their poetry, offers illustration of this fact. It was the national conception of artistic form which Aristotle held before him in developing his theories of poetry.

But while there was a distinct artistic ideal which had been shaping through centuries, it was not universal; we learn that some artists did not work towards it; that they proceeded by methods of which Aristotle disapproved. For example, Dionysius drew men true to life, while Pauson caricatured them, but the work of neither represented the highest form of art.[1]

After the time of Aristotle, as the Greek nation advanced towards the destruction of its social organization, it modified, or lost, its old artistic ideal. The forms which it once had censured it began to regard with favor, and an increasing realism[2] became manifest in its poetry; the individual—his interests, his personal feelings and experiences—was substituted for the universal significance and general interest of the type.

### *Roman.*

The characteristics of the art of this transitional period among the Greeks appealed to the Roman nation, and tinge the precepts in which Horace reveals the status of Roman

[1] *Poetics*, ii.

[2] Cf. the comedy of Menander, as known through Plautus and Terence, with that of Aristophanes.

criticism. Nevertheless, Horace's notion of poetry indicates a survival of Aristotle's principles, in that he directs attention to the aesthetic side, emphasizes the necessity of unity of conception[1] and consistency of character,[2] and points us to Homer to learn

> What numbers suit the daring bard who sings
> Embattled hosts and kings encountering kings;[3]

but he believes that the poet must 'teach' as well as 'please,' must 'profit' as well as 'amuse.'[4] Not only in this but in another and more vital particular his teachings differ from those of Aristotle; for the Aristotelian 'imitation,' which encourages idealization, he substitutes a copy of nature 'to the life,'[5] and by so doing shows his sympathy with the later Greek tendencies.

The idea of imitation expressed by Horace finds exemplification in the *Aeneid,* where the characters are Roman instead of universal, where the highest artistic conception of the poet is realized in the head of the empire, and biographical incidents further localize and materialize the conception. It finds additional exemplification in portrait sculpture, where the artist endeavored to reproduce exactly what he saw in actual existence. The effort of the Romans was not, like that of the earlier Greeks, to eliminate from the individual all save his universal traits, but to present him as he appeared in reality.

### *Medieval.*

The Roman ideal was in its turn modified by being subjected to the influence of Christianity. This influence magnified the importance of the individual by insisting upon his personal responsibilities, duties, and compensations, and, in addition to thus increasing the Roman tendency towards individualism, it introduced other elements into the develop-

[1] *Ars poetica,* 1-25. [2] *Ib.,* 119-127. [3] *Ib.,* 73, 74.
[4] *Ib.,* 333. [5] *Ib.,* 317, 318.

ment of the artistic ideal. While by the Roman the individual had been viewed from the physical, the material side, the supreme question with the Church was how it might best develop the spiritual side. With its attention unwaveringly fixed upon this end, it tried all literature by the ethical standard only. It distrusted the fabulous accounts of the poets, since it did not find in them the direct incitements to duty which it found in the Bible and in the writings of the Fathers. Thus we are told by Tertullian, in the third century,[1] that 'the Author of truth hates all that is false. . . . He never will approve pretended loves, and wraths, and groans, and tears'; and according to Isidore of Seville,[2] of the sixth century, the fancies of the poets are harmful through their suggestiveness, and for this reason Christians are forbidden to read them.

In the face of such opposition, the advocates of poetry endeavored to justify its existence by laying emphasis upon its fitness for promulgating moral principles. They saw in all poetry an embodiment of spiritual ideas, and, at need, forced upon it an allegorical interpretation. In this way the *Aeneid* became, like the *Divine Comedy,* a symbolic representation of the progress of human life.

This allegorical method of interpretation, this refuge for the friends of poetry when hard pressed by the Church's utilitarianism, further became the means by which a species of idealization was substituted for the realistic 'copy' of Horace. The idealization was not, however, that of the Greeks. As has been said, they generalized the particular individual, but he maintained his relation to the visible world. In the Middle Ages the process was reversed; the artist started with an abstract idea which he embodied in an individual; he subordinated the sensuous form to the spiritual content, and transferred the action to the invisible world. The method finds its highest illustration in the

[1] Tertullian, *De spectac.,* xxii, xxiii. Cited by Spingarn, *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance,* p. 5.

[2] *Differentiae,* iii, 13, 1. Cited by Spingarn, p. 5.

*Divine Comedy*, where, although the action belongs to the invisible world, the author yet maintains a unity between the soul's experiences in that world and the terrestrial. It was only a master in art who could preserve the unity between the thing and the meaning it conveyed, while conscious that they were entirely distinct. With minds fixed upon the supreme importance of embodying some abstract idea, which perhaps could not be sensuously represented, it was not strange that the poets sometimes moved these embodiments like wooden manikins through a plot that symbolized a struggle between abstract ideas. It was inevitable, when the patrons of poetry must force it into this unnatural position, that form should become of secondary importance; that it should be significant only in so far as it rendered palatable a wholesome moral medicine. The consequence, as shown in methods of criticism, was that the aesthetic standard temporarily retired from view, and poetry succeeded in proportion as it incited to right living.

By means of the allegorical method of interpretation the friends of poetry were able to demonstrate satisfactorily its value as a moral agent, and we find that in the fifteenth century Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini can say that the question is no longer, 'Is poetry to be condemned?' but, 'How are the poets to be used?'[1] While this result was being brought about, Aristotle's *Poetics*[2] seems to have been neglected, but Horace's *Ars poetica*[3] continued to be authoritative.

[1] *De liberorum educatione*, p. 150. Cited by Spingarn, p. 12.

[2] We owe its modern transmission to the Orientals. There was a version by Abu-Baschar from Syriac into Arabic, about 935, and two centuries later an abridged version by Averroes, which was translated into Latin in the thirteenth century by the German, Hermann, and in the fourteenth century by the Spaniard, Mantinus. There was a translation by Giorgio Valla in the fifteenth century, and there were several versions in the early part of the sixteenth century, but the influence of these was not manifest in critical theory until about the middle of the century.

[3] It is quoted in the sixth century by Isidore of Seville, in the twelfth by John of Salisbury, and in the fourteenth by Dante.

With the beginning of the sixteenth century there is a reaction against the theological monopolization of poetry, although belief in its moral purpose continues unshaken. Contemporary with this, Aristotle reappears as if in response to the demands of the time, and is found to fit satisfactorily into the existing conditions. He had contended that the province of poetry was to present life in its noblest form; the critical world perceived that this gave poetry, of necessity, a moral influence, even if its aim was not directly ethical. Moreover, in his analysis of the method by which poetry purified the emotions which it excited was found an answer to the assertion made by Plutarch, and by others before and after him, that it stirred the baser passions without calming them.

The effect of the revival of Aristotle must have been, further, to re-direct the attention towards form, or at least to strengthen an already existing tendency in that direction.

### *Italian.*

Vida, in his *Ars poetica* (circa 1520), gives no definite theory of either poetic function or form. He recognizes, however, the ethical purpose of poetry, and tells us that 'gay description' should alternate with 'grave, instructive sentences,'

> That touch on life, some moral good pursue,
> And give us virtue in a transient view.[1]

He lays special emphasis upon the minutiae of composition, the details of invention and of arrangement and the essentials of elegant style, and his teachings accordingly bring into prominence the formal side of criticism. He advocates a strict conformity to the standards of reason[2] and a scrupulous imitation of nature.[3] Reason is to exclude chance from any part in the design of the poem,[4] and also

[1] II, 278 ff.
[2] II, 160-165; 445-455.
[3] II, 456.
[4] II, 161-165.

is to limit the expression of the poet's personality and feeling.[1] Nature is to be imitated because the 'noblest poets' have 'owned her sovereign sway,' and it is to be done in accordance with certain precepts drawn chiefly from the study of the *Aeneid*. While in the *Poetica* there is no attempt to define the separate species of poetry, Vida takes his illustrations from epic poems, and considers the epic the highest form of poetic art.[2] From this time on, epic theory plays an important part in Italian criticism.

Daniello (1535), in his *Poetica,* does not give the epic profound consideration, but recognizes it as a separate poetic species, and defines it, in accordance with the conception of Horace, as an imitation of the high deeds of kings and leaders.[3] That he had also felt the influence of Aristotle is indicated by the distinction he makes between the poet and the historian; the aim of both is to teach and to delight, but while the historian must confine himself to facts, the poet may add to his story whatever has the appearance of truth.[4]

In Scaliger (1561) this vague groping after the principles of Aristotle gave place to a definite statement of reverence for him as the master, the supreme dictator of all the arts.[5] The reverence was felt, however, for a metamorphosed master, for, while poetry was to Scaliger, as it had been to Aristotle, an imitation of what ought to be, rather than what is,[6] imitation had assumed a different aspect. According to Scaliger, the poets, and especially Vergil, had created in their imitation a nature more beautiful than the reality; consequently, in seeking his subject-matter, the poet had better use the artistic imitation of Vergil as his model than nature itself.[7] This was the substitution of the classics for

[1] II, 445-455. [2] I, 33-35.

[3] Cf. *supra,* p. 12; note the less restricted conception of Aristotle, *Poetics,* v, xiii, xv.

[4] *Poetica,* pp. 41 ff; cf. Aristotle, ix; cf. Spingarn, p. 29.

[5] *Poet.,* vii, ii, 1; cf. Spingarn, p. 141. [6] *Ib.,* i, 1.

[7] *Ib.,* iii, 4; cf. Spingarn, p. 134.

nature, and, as such, was a step beyond the position of Vida, where nature was yet to be imitated, although on the authority of the classics. Moreover, the office of reason was magnified beyond the conception of Vida. According to Scaliger, reason was to determine the norm in every species of literature; it was the duty of the critic to define or formulate this norm, and the duty of the poet to follow it without deviation.[1] These principles, which were made applicable to poetry in general, had, of course, direct influence upon the idea of the epic.

Aristotle's theory of the epic was revived more specifically by Trissino (1563), who made unity of action the characteristic which distinguishes it from other narrative poetry. At the same time he condemned Boccaccio, Boiardo, and Ariosto, because they did not recognize the imperative necessity of this characteristic, and because they represented improbable events, and did not employ the proper metre;[2] but he made some concession to the romantic poets in his conception of the extended plan and unlimited scope proper to an epic poem.[3]

Before this time a controversy had been inaugurated between the promoters of classic authority and those who would disregard it. Giraldi Cintio (1554) had argued[4] that the literature of peoples who differed so essentially as did the Greeks and the Tuscans would naturally be different, and could not be equally subject to the Aristotelian rules. He recognized epic poetry as an imitation of illustrious actions, but believed that it was divided into distinct kinds, according as it imitated a single action of one man, many actions of one man, or many actions of many men. In the first of these he found the Aristotelian epic, in which it is possible to hasten at once *in medias res;* but the poet who is writing a poem of the second kind should begin at

[1] *Ib.*, iii, 11; cf. Spingarn, pp. 149 ff.
[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 9.
[3] *Poetica*, ii, pp. 112 ff.
[4] *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*, i; cf. Spingarn, pp. 113 ff.

the beginning of the hero's life, and in the third he should begin with the most important event. In the third, which is the romantic epic, Cintio saw the development, in accordance with natural law, of a species which is in harmony with the spirit of the people among whom it was produced, but which, since it was unknown to Aristotle, can not be tried by his standards.

To this Minturno (1564) and others responded. Minturno[1] maintained that everything in art, as in nature, is governed by some specific law to which it must conform; that the fundamental requirement of epic poetry is unity of action, and that it is at this point that the romantic epics transgress. He adapted Aristotle's definition of tragedy to epic poetry, finding in both, as Cintio had also done, the purgation of pity and fear through the proper imitation of those emotions.[2] He limited the length of the action to one year.[3]

Castelvetro (1570), contrary to Aristotle,[4] thought[5] it not necessary for the unity of the epic to differ from the unity of history,[6] but that it is desirable. He recognized the biographical and the romantic epic as given by Cintio, but considered that the poet shows his skill in proportion as he properly limits the action, the more perfect poem being that which restricts itself to a short time and to few places.

Torquato Tasso (1587) brought about a reconciliation of the romantic idea with the classic. He does not consider the *romanzi* a separate species, to be dealt with outside of the general Aristotelian law. On the contrary, the authority of Aristotle is supreme, but the romantic poems may be made to conform to his principles. In his mind there is no question, as there was in Cintio's, as to the necessity of unity.[7]

[1] *Arte poetica,* p. 31; cf. Spingarn, pp. 117 ff.
[2] *Ib.,* p. 9; cf. Spingarn, p. 110.
[3] *Ib.,* p. 71; cf. Spingarn, p. 207.
[4] Cf. *Poetics,* ix. [5] *Poetica,* pp. 158 ff. [6] *Ib.,* pp. 178 ff.
[7] *Discorsi dell' arte poetica,* xii, p. 234; cf. Spingarn, p. 120.

There are two kinds of unity possible: one, that of a chemical compound; the other, that of an animal or vegetable organism. It is the second kind which is fitting for an epic poem. The structure of the classic poem is a model to be imitated, but the material[1] of the romantic is more delightful. The epic should not deal either with contemporary events or with those so remote that strange manners and customs must be introduced; it should deal with some historical event in the existence of a Christian nation.[2] The event should be historical in order that it may appear to be true; it should be Christian, for, by the introduction of pagan deities, the story becomes improbable, and, if these supernatural elements are omitted, the poem lacks the quality of the marvelous; but the theme should not be so sacred that it will restrict the movements of the poet's fancy. It is not necessary for the epic, as for the tragedy, to arouse the emotions of pity and fear; consequently, the heroes of the two kinds of poetry, although they should be of the same high rank, may differ in character.[3] Indeed, the hero of the epic is preferably a man of supreme goodness, as the hero of tragedy is not. A pagan hero is necessarily undesirable, because he lacks the essential qualification of piety. In harmony with these statements, Tasso thought that the times of Charlemagne and of Arthur furnish the best material for epic poems.

It is noticeable that at this point the contention is no longer against the authority of Aristotle; on the contrary, he constitutes the supreme court of appeal for both sides in the controversy. To sum up, we find that by the end of the sixteenth century the imitation of the classics had become, under the leadership of Vida and Scaliger, an essential condition for the attainment of literary skill; reason had been exalted as a judge over the works of the creative imagination; Aristotle had been established as the supreme authority in literary criticism, and epic poems had been restricted within certain fixed limits. The Renaissance had

[1] *Ib.*, xii, p. 219. [2] *Ib.*, xii, p. 199. [3] Cf. *Aristotle*, v, xiii.

placed its emphasis, as we have seen, upon the formal side in its epic criticism, but it had kept alive its inherited belief in the ethical function of poetry, and, according to the general Italian conception, a poem was designed for instruction as well as for pleasure. There were, however, critics who did not concur in this conception, and conspicuous among them was Castelvetro, who plainly states that the true purpose of poetry is to delight.[1]

For the two centuries following, epic theory, as formulated by the Italians, underwent few modifications at the hands of other European critics.

### *French.*

The early French writers seem to be without distinct epic theory, but, in general, show that they have come under Italian influence. Ronsard (1572), in his preface to the *Franciade*,[2] speaks vaguely of epic poetry as fiction which deals with warlike achievements belonging to a somewhat remote past, but he restricts its action, as Minturno had done eighteen years earlier, to the space of one year.[3] Vauquelin de la Fresnaye (circa 1605) acknowledges specifically his indebtedness to Aristotle, Horace, Vida, and Minturno, and incorporates many of their ideas in his *Art poétique*.[4] He conceives of the epic as 'un tableau du monde,' a mirror in which are reflected the deeds of mortals; it contains within itself all kinds of poetry, 'Soit tragique ou comique, ou soit autre poëme.'[5] He also limits the action to one year.[6]

It was not until later in the seventeenth century that there was any definite formulation of epic theory in France, but recognition of an established form was shown in the prefaces to various epics. For example, Saint-Amant calls his *Moyse sauvé* (1653) a heroic idyl, because it does not come up to the demands of the epic; it does not celebrate an

[1] *Poetica*, p. 505.
[2] *Oeuvres*, iii, p. 23.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 19.
[4] I, p. 63.
[5] *Op. cit.*, i, pp. 471, 503.
[6] *Op. cit.*, ii, p. 253.

active hero, or great battles, or the besieging of cities, and the action lasts only one day instead of a year. Again, he says, that although, for the reasons given, 'he has not confined himself entirely to the laws governing the epic, he has observed the unities of place and action, which are the principal requirements; and, in a manner entirely new, has confined his action, not only to the twenty-four hours which form the limit of the dramatic poem, but to scarcely more than half that time. It is more than Aristotle, Horace, Scaliger, Castelvetro, Piccolomini, or any other modern has ever demanded.'[1]

Rapin, in the Preface to his *Reflexions sur l'art poétique* (1674), makes it clear that up to this time the French had relied upon foreign criticism. He tells[2] us that 'we have had no books of poesy till this last age; when that of Aristotle, with his other works, was brought from Constantinople to Italy'; and the list of commentators upon Aristotle which follows is made up almost exclusively of Italians. He assures us that he presents no new theory of poetry; 'for that of Aristotle only is to be adhered to, as the exactest rule [illegible] governing the wit. In effect, this treatise of poesy, to speak properly, is nothing else but nature put in method, and good sense reduced to principles.' Again, 'if a poem made by these rules fails of success, the fault lies not in the art, but in the artist.' His idea of the function of poetry is in accord with the prevailing Italian sentiment; it aims at delight, and 'omits nothing that may contribute thereto,' but its principal end is to 'profit.' As to the structure of a poem, it is only by the rules of Aristotle, especially those pertaining to the unities of place, time, and action, that it can be made 'just, proportionate and natural, for they are founded on good sense and sound reason, rather than on authority and example.'

Boileau's *Art poétique,* which was published in 1674, expresses definitely the century's deification of reason. His

[1] *Oeuvres,* ii. Pref. to *Moyse sauvé.*

[2] *Critical Works,* ii, pp. 131 ff.

first precept is 'Aimez donc raison,'[1] and naturally, following this, he disapproves of any excess or extravagance in action or expression. He tells us that nature is the embodiment of reason and truth, and counsels the poet to imitate nature;[2] but it is from the classics that he will best learn the method of imitation, for both their precepts and their practice are in accord with the dictates of reason; consequently, in imitating them, the poet is, at the same time, imitating the real nature, not something which is higher and better, as Scaliger had thought.[3] His position is still further removed from that of Vida, who would imitate nature on the authority of the classics;[4] Boileau would imitate the classics on the authority of nature and reason.[5]

His work, like that of Rapin, gives evidence of the increasing rigidity of the imported rules which the French were endeavoring to put into practical use. We are reminded that the 'place of action must be fixed'; that, while other people may present whole ages in one day's space, 'we, that are by reason's rule confined,' must observe the 'unity of action, time, and place.'[6] But Boileau gave no definite theory of epic structure. He thought of this form of poetry as a 'vaste récit d'une longue action';[7] where pagan subjects were to be preferred to Christian,[8] where the hero must be admirable because of virtue and courage,[9] and the incidents should be short, and interspersed with descriptions[10] and figures.[11]

The details of epic construction are given with somewhat greater coherence by Le Bossu, whose *Traité du poème epique* was published in 1675. He is scrupulously deferential to the authority of Aristotle, or, rather, to his idea of Aristotle. He tells us that, according to this authority, the plot should first be invented, with due regard to its probability, and then well-known names should be given to the

[1] *Art poétique,* i, 37. [2] *Ib.,* ii, 10-38. [3] Cf. *supra,* p. 16.
[4] Cf. *supra,* p. 16. [5] Cf. Spingarn, p. 135.
[6] *Art poétique,* iii, 38-46. [7] *Ib.,* iii, 161. [8] *Ib.,* iii, 193-245.
[9] *Ib.,* iii, 246, 247. [10] *Ib.,* iii, 257, 258. [11] *Ib.,* iii, 287.

feigned actors.[1] As to the characters, 'we may conclude that reason and the nature of the poem, the practice of Homer and the precepts of Aristotle and Horace, do all inform us that it is not at all necessary that the hero of a poem should be a good and virtuous man, and that there is no irregularity in making him as treacherous as Ixion, as unnatural as Medea, and as brutal as Achilles.'[2] With regard to the duration of the narrative, he inclines to the opinion that the practice both of Homer and of Vergil brings it within the compass of one year.[3]

The French had accepted, in general, the ethical conception of poetry; accordingly, to Boileau the purpose of the epic was to furnish instruction, and it should do so under the guise of allegory.

With these men we reach the culmination of classic theory in France. When Voltaire, in the next century, returns to the subject of the epic, we read that the rules which have been made serve but to hinder the progress of genius, and are only the feeblest of helps to those who lack ability. He defines the epic as 'a recital in verse of heroic adventures; whether the action be simple or complex; whether it be finished in one month, or one year, or in a longer time; whether the scene be laid in one place, as in the Iliad, or whether the hero travel from sea to sea, as in the Odyssey; whether he be fortunate or unfortunate; fierce as Achilles, or pious as Aeneas; whether there be one principal personage, or many; whether the action be upon the land, or upon the sea; on the shore of Africa, . . . in America, . . . in heaven, . . . in hell, . . . beyond the limits of our world; it does not matter; the poem will always be an epic poem.' . . .[4]

[1] *Traité du poème epique,* i, chap. xiii; cf. Aristotle, ix, xvii.
[2] *Ib.,* iv, chap. v.
[3] *Ib.,* iii, chap. xii.
[4] *Oeuvres,* x, *La Henriade,* pp. 335 ff.

### *English.*

The English criticism of the epic, like the French, receives its first impetus from the Italians. Their influence is noticeable in the *Defense* of Sidney[1] published in 1595; but the attacks of the Puritans, to which the *Defense* was a reply, were especially directed against the drama; consequently Sidney merely mentions the epic as the noblest form of poetry, in that it furnishes characters especially worthy of imitation.

An indication of the tendency of criticism, and at the same time a declaration of English independence, is found in the second part of Harrington's *Apologie of Poetry* (1591). The attempt is here made to show that Ariosto in his *Orlando Furioso* adhered to the classic standards, but this is done in deference to those critics who insist upon trying 'heroical poems' by the 'method of Homer and the precepts of Aristotle'; and, at the same time, it is said that what 'was commendable for Homer to write in that age, the times being changed, would be thought otherwise now.'[2] But while this indicates a restlessness under established authority, the English critics did not revolt against it. They knew and accepted the standards of the Italian Renaissance, having been brought not only under the direct Italian influence, but having also felt it at second hand through the writings of Le Bossu, Rapin, and others. Thus we find Milton in his tractate *On Education,* writing of that 'sublime art, which in Aristotle's *Poetics,* in Horace, and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzoni, and others, teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem, what of a dramatic, what of a lyric, what decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece to observe.'

It is not, however, until the publication of Addison's essays on *Paradise Lost* in the *Spectator* (1711-12) that there is any adequate treatment of the epic in English.

[1] It circulated in manuscript several years before publication.
[2] Haselwood, *Ancient Critical Essays,* p. 140.

Jonson[1] deals with it only incidentally in the discussion of the relative magnitudes of a dramatic and an epic plot, and through characters whose opinions we may infer were his own.[2] Blackmore, in the preface to his *Prince Arthur*, shows that in the mechanism of his poem he has followed closely the lines that have been laid down. He has practically concentrated Le Bossu's idea of an epic in the definition which he gives, with the exception that he insists only upon the unity of action. Dryden states the claims of the classics to veneration,[3] but makes the imitation of nature the basis of all poetry. It is true that his reason for the imitation of nature is a variable one, sometimes seeming to rest upon his desire to present a hidden perfection which he sees lying behind the interrupted completion of nature's facts,[4] and again upon the authority of the 'Ancients,' whose rules had received no additions and needed none.[5] Dryden's mind was a battle-ground where independence of the rules

[1] *Timber*, p. 84.

[2] For example, Lovel, Act I, Sc. I, of *The New Inn*, says of Lord Beaufort:

> I waited on his studies which were right.
> He had no Arthurs, nor no Rosicleers,
> No Knights o' the Sun, nor Amadis de Gauls,
> . . . . . .
> But great Achilles, Agamemnon's acts,
> Sage Nestor's counsels, and Ulysses' slights,
> Tydides' fortitude, as Homer wrought them
> In his immortal phant'sy for examples
> Of heroic virtue. Or as Virgil,
> That master of the epic poem, limn'd
> Pious Aeneas, etc.

[3] *Works* xv, *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, pp. 304 ff.; cf. v, Preface to *All for Love;* vi, Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, Preface to *Secret Love*, Preface to *Albion and Albanius;* viii, Preface to *Cleomenes;* xiii, *Essay on Satire*, pp. 15 ff.

[4] Cf. *Works*, ii, Dedication to the *Rival Ladies*, p. 132; also, xv, p. 302.

[5] *Works*, ii, *Def. of Essay of Dram. Poesy*, p. 308.

and reverence for them kept up a continuous struggle; but while he epitomized the conflict of his time, he reached no definite conclusion, and made no advance in specific epic theory.[1]

In Addison English criticism had passed beyond its period of hesitation, and had recognized and combined its apparently conflicting elements. Addison's judgment of Milton is rendered in accordance with a definite standard, but his method, nevertheless, differs from that method of the seventeenth century French critics which the English critics had endeavored to adopt. The French ideal was not one to be adjusted to the genius of a particular people or to the conditions of a particular time; in their view there was but one type of epic, the perfect type for every people and all time. On the other hand, there was in Addison a blending of sympathetic and formal criticism—a recognition of the fact that not even the principles of Aristotle, or the rigid laws which had been built up by following critics, could adequately cover all questions of taste. There was not so much the assertion, as the acknowledgment, of the right to independence of spirit.

He tells us that 'Aristotle's rules for epic poetry, which he had drawn from his reflections upon Homer, cannot be supposed to quadrate exactly with the heroic poems which had been made since that time,' but he makes the general precepts of Aristotle the foundation of his standard of criticism. He recognizes Horace, Longinus, Le Bossu, Boileau, and others as contributors to poetic theory, although he does not find in such contributions invariable rules. This is indicated by his genial remark that, since a large part of Milton's story 'was transacted in regions that lie out of the reach of the sun and the sphere of day,' he cannot gratify his readers with a calculation as to the length of time consumed in the action.[2] The work of Addison gives evidence

[1] Cf. *Works*, v, *Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License*, pp. 111 ff.

[2] *Addison on Paradise Lost*, p. 6.

of a broadening vision which was looking for underlying principles of universal application, instead of specific, and, from their nature, limited, rules; and in this characteristic he is most truly Aristotelian.

Dr. Johnson, in his treatment of the epic, transmits a strictly classical criticism. He measures the *Paradise Lost* by 'established standards,' and finds it in accord with them so far as its structure is concerned, but defective when its subject-matter is considered. At the same time, the spirit of independence which was noticeable in Addison was not absent in Johnson. We find that notwithstanding he was zealous to uphold the 'indispensable laws of Aristotelian criticism,'[1] he would not have Milton's work other than it is, even though it fail to accord with those laws,[2] and, in a more general discussion of the canons of criticism, he tells us that 'it ought to be the first endeavor of a writer to distinguish nature from custom, or that which is established because it is right from that which is right only because it is established.'[3] The classic school in England, of which he was a representative, while insisting upon the maintenance of an absolute standard, did not hesitate to express delight in the work of those who, like Dryden, followed the rules at a distance.[4]

### *German.*

Outside of the field of formal criticism there were influences at work which were felt in the later treatment of the epic. The application by Addison, and other critics of his age, of contemporary philosophical methods to aesthetic theories,[5] foreshadows the adoption in the nineteenth century of a revolutionary method of epic study. Its results are most clearly manifest in the work of the Germans, where, in the latter half of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth

[1] *Rambler,* no. 139. [2] *Lives,* i, p. 202. [3] *Rambler,* no. 156.
[4] *Works,* vii. Pref. to *Don Sebastian,* p. 313.
[5] Cf. *Spectator,* nos. 411-421.

century, we find that criticism has put aside the discussion of poetic function and the analysis of structure, and has devoted itself to defining more clearly the poetic species, and to determining, by means of psychological and historical investigation, the processes by which they develop.

Before that time, German criticism had lacked vigor and originality. The influence of Minturno, Scaliger, and other Italians had been acknowledged by Fabricius in his *De re poetica* (1584). The work of Opitz (1624),[1] which furnished the first systematic treatment of poetry, relied especially upon Ronsard and Heinsius.[2] Gottsched, in his *Kritische Dicht-Kunst* (1730), turned to the later French criticism, as represented by Le Bossu and Boileau. His rules for the construction of a tragic plot are those of Le Bossu[3] for the epic plot. His especial aim was to develop a German drama, and with him, as with the other critics of the time, the epic was only incidentally mentioned. But the conception of it as a species of literature was necessarily changing, as the conception of the relation existing between the ancients and the moderns was changing; that the idea of their divergence was giving place to a sense of their connection was apparent in the opposition to Gottsched. This opposition was led (1740) by Bodmer[4] and Breitinger,[5] who advocated a direct return to the classic methods, and who yet saw between Homer and the moderns, as represented by Milton and Ariosto, an underlying unity.[6]

The *Paradise Lost* of Milton, in which England had found united so many elements which entered into her literary development, became a centre of criticism in Germany as in England; in both countries it appealed to the characteristic thought of the period, which, as has been said, was making an effort to disclose the common philosophical basis upon

[1] *Buch von der deutschen Poeterei.*

[2] *De tragoediae constitutione* (1611), and edition of Aristotle's *Poetics.*

[3] Cf. *supra*, p. 22. [4] Cf. *Vom Wunderbaren in der Poesie.*

[5] Cf. *Kritische Dicht-Kunst.* [6] Cf. Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

which the work of the ancients and that of the moderns was founded. It appealed especially to Lessing, and in his judgment was second only to the Homeric epics.[1] But the criticism of Lessing did not deal especially with the epic, although the general conclusions which he draws in the *Laokoon* apply to it in common with other forms of poetry. The definition[2] of poetry given there, as a progressive imitation of action, might be construed, as it was by Herder,[3] to exclude all poetic forms except epic and drama. Lessing's conclusion that this imitation permits the poet to deal with only one property of his subject at a time is especially directed against elaborate descriptions, and is in direct opposition to the romantic tendency which was then gaining ground.

The criticism of Lessing led a revolt against French criticism, but not against the principles of Aristotle, whose *Poetics* he considered as 'infallible as the elements of Euclid.' His effort was to clear the *Poetics* from the additions and arbitrary interpretations from which it had suffered, to perfect and purify classic criticism rather than to destroy it. His attitude towards law was one of reverence for the spirit instead of for the letter, and his conception of it was that of an 'inner, molding power,' instead of an 'outside, restraining force.'[4] He endeavored to make clear that underlying the work of the ancients and the moderns was a common principle, which found different expression because of the different material with which it worked.[5]

Herder, who like Lessing was influenced by the desire to develop a great national literature in Germany, advanced from a different standpoint. He magnified the national characteristics,[6] and emphasized the importance of adhering to a national type. This naturally involved, for the Germans,

[1] *Laokoon,* chap. xiv. [2] *Ib.,* chap. xvi.
[3] *Kritische Wälder,* i, 16, 17, 18.
[4] Wylie, *Evolution of English Criticism,* p. 26.
[5] *Ham. Dram.,* July 3, 1769.
[6] *Werke,* iii, 2, *Shakespear,* p. 230.

a study of the early form of their own literature, in which Herder found the real, spontaneous expression of the national spirit. He applied the historic method to the study of literature, as it had previously been applied by Winckelmann[1] to the study of art, and this method was directly influential in extending the field of epic criticism. Further, his emphasis of the distinction[2] between the folk-song, in which the spirit of the nation finds expression, and artificial poetry, in which are expressed the feelings and ideas of the individual, was fruitful in suggestion to the investigators of epic development.

It found a modified reproduction in Schiller's division of poetry into the *Naive* and the *Sentimentalische*.[3] The *Naive*, whether the product of ancient or of modern, reproduces nature at first hand; the poet is so much at one with nature that his work is the direct reflection of it. The *Sentimentalische* reproduces nature through the understanding of the poet. A poem of one kind is not to be compared with one of the other as though they belonged to the same order, but only in so far as we deal with a principle that is common to both.[4]

Schiller's direct treatment of the epic is to be found in his correspondence with Goethe,[5] in which the effort of both is to discriminate between it and tragedy. Goethe says that neither epic nor tragedy can assume anything exclusively to itself; they are both 'subject to general laws, especially to the law of unity and of development'; they treat of different subjects, and may both use all kinds of motives; they both deal with three worlds—the physical, the moral, and the fanciful; but the epic poet depicts events as past, while the dramatic poet represents them as present; the epic poet

[1] Cf. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
[2] Cf. Carriere, *Die Poesie*, pp. 173 ff.
[3] *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung.*
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 318-340; cf. Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, pp. 298 ff.
[5] *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe*, i, letters 399 and 400.

appeals calmly to the imagination of his hearers, while the dramatic presents everything visibly, and keeps the senses of his hearers on the stretch.

To these things Schiller agreed, and added that in viewing a dramatic action the imagination of the spectator loses its freedom, and reflection is impossible to him; on the other hand, while he listens to the epic, the reverse is true. Schiller pursued the line of thought further; since poetry makes everything 'sensuously present,' it obliges the epic poet to make the past present, 'only the character of its belonging to the past must not be effaced'; again, since through ideality poetry makes distant all that is near, it obliges the dramatic poet to keep reality from forcing itself upon us. Tragedy, therefore, in its highest conception, strives to acquire an epic character, while the epic, in like manner, strives towards the dramatic.

The philosophical and the historical criticism have developed side by side in Germany; sometimes they are united, as in Wackernagel's *Poetik,* where, basing his argument first upon historical and then upon psychological investigation, he finds the order of succession in poetic species to be: epical-epic, lyrical-epic, epical-lyric, lyrical-lyric, drama. First comes an objective narrative of the deeds of others; then the objective development of the subjective conditions of others, and then the poet comes to the development of his own condition. The drama is a melting together of the epic and the lyric; it is epic in so far as not only occurrences, but feelings, lie outside of the personality of the poet; it is lyric in so far as he is developing the subjective conditions of another individual, into which he has put himself. It is epic in that occurrences did happen, or are thought to have happened; it is lyric in that occurrences are presented with their accompanying subjective conditions, developed moment for moment before the spectator.

Then, again, the criticism may be purely historic, and in such investigations the workers have necessarily devoted

themselves to special fields. The application of this method may be said to have been started by Wolf in his *Prolegomena* (1795), and it has been continued through the nineteenth century, not by the Germans alone, but by other nations as well, until not only the Homeric epics, but the *Nibelungenlied,* the *Roland*, the *Beowulf,* and the other literary monuments of the early life of the various peoples, have their especial investigators.

## II. *Results of the Modern Method of Criticism.*

One result of the modern method of criticism has been to open an extended view of the evolution of epical material, and to show it at various stages of development; but the different conditions of the people producing it, and their inherent tendencies, have caused it to appear in different forms, and the critics are not agreed as to just what point it should reach in its progress before it is worthy to receive the name of epic, nor as to what narrative products shall be excluded from the epic species. For example, to Rajna the epic is a 'poetic narrative of memorable things';[1] while Scherer, by his convenient division into the *Kleine* and the *Grosse*, includes practically all imaginative narrative in verse or prose.[2]

The broadest classification furnishes the only common ground for ancient and modern critics. 'Epic' is a term applied by them all to narrative literature, but beyond this there is disagreement. One thinks that its aim is to delight, another that it is to instruct, and yet another thinks that it unites both functions. As to structure, one critic demands unity of action, another insists upon unity of time, place, and action, and yet another tells us that no unity other than that of history is necessary. The fundamental distinction of the epic from other species of literature is that upon which they all agree—its narrative form.

[1] *Le origini dell' epopea francese,* p. 3.
[2] *Poetik,* pp. 247 ff.; cf. also Carriere, *Die Poesie,* pp. 193-367.

The criticism of the nineteenth century, in placing itself upon its present basis, makes a return to the spirit of Aristotle's method, although it no longer accepts his authority without question. We find that he first traced the growth of the epic species psychologically and historically, and then, from a close study and comparison of the poems known to him, endeavored to deduce the principles underlying their development. Similarly, the dominating purpose of the nineteenth century critic of the epic has been, as we have seen,[1] to discover the underlying principles of development; and in order to do so he has turned, as Aristotle did, to the early epic monuments which meet him at the threshold of historical life.

These early monuments offer opportunity for the study of the processes of natural growth—an opportunity not afforded by those epics which have been put together in accordance with the prescriptions of the critics. In considering the epic, therefore, it becomes necessary to divide it first into a natural and an artificial product, though it should be kept in mind that an exact line of demarcation between the two cannot be drawn.

There is, indeed, a wide difference between the *Paradise Lost* and the *Beowulf;* in the one the author has taken his material from the written record, and has re-arranged, polished, and created with a consciousness of his individual responsibility for the perfection of his work. The other is a poem which belongs to the people; its substance is rooted far back in their tribal history; it has lain in their memories, and has become impregnated with their spirit; it is the embodiment of their superstitions and their beliefs, the representation of the conditions of their common life; it has been transmitted orally, and subjected to the modifications incident to such transmission—to forgetfulness, false conception, and free improvisation; it is a natural product, developed according to the laws that govern a natural growth. But there are poems which partake of the qualities

[1] Cf. *supra,* pp. 30 ff.

both of the natural and of the artificial epic; in which it is difficult or impossible to determine whether the influence of the individual author has prevailed in their construction, or whether the influence of the people has been predominant.[1] The transition from the natural to the artificial is not sudden, but gradual, and the application of the terms is to different stages in the evolution of the same species, and not to totally distinct developments.

In addition to the blending of the natural and the artificial elements in the same poem, we find that the existence of distinctly artificial creations does not necessarily imply the extinction of the natural, as is illustrated in the south of France, where the song of Roland still lingers on the lips of the people;[2] or in Ireland, where the peasants still chant the deeds of Finn and his heroes;[3] or in Russia, where the legends of Platov and his Cossacks are sung by the popular bards.[4]

Notwithstanding the merging of the one form of epic into the other, and the frequent co-existence of a natural and an artificial literature among a people, the natural historically precedes the artificial, and we turn first to it, therefore, as we said above, in making a study of epic growth.

## III. *Different Phases of Epic Development.*

The investigations of Aristotle were principally concerned with the development of the art of poetry as a whole, but he made use of epic poems in illustration of his argument, and throughout his discussion it appears that he recognized in the *Iliad*[5] and the *Odyssey*[6] the climax of epic production. He realized that more extended stories lay behind them; that an artistic sense of form and proportion had eliminated from the finished poems a mass of stories which were not

[1] Cf. *infra*, pp. 61 ff., 82, 134 ff. [2] Gröber, *Grundriss*, ii, 2, p. 2.
[3] Hull, *Cuchullin Saga*, Introd.
[4] Waliszewski, *Hist. of Russian Literature*, p. 8.
[5] *Poetics*, xxiii. [6] *Ib.*, viii.

organically related to the central action. Even the measure in which the poems were written was to his mind justified as being sanctioned by long experience, which had demonstrated the unfitness of other measures for narrative verse.[1]

The investigations of later critics have shown that similar conditions preceded the appearance of other great national epics, and a more minute study of those conditions has rendered certain conclusions justifiable. For example, with reference to the epic hero, in the French national epic he is seen to approach his high eminence gradually. Hrodland, Count of the March of Brittany, fell with Charlemagne's rear-guard in an obscure mountain pass as they were returning from a successful expedition into Spain; but in the songs of the people he became the nephew of the king, the chief of the twelve peers, the leader in the struggle between paganism and Christianity, the national hero, embodying the French ideals. It is fair to suppose that by some similar process other heroes have become representative of their nations.

Proceeding yet further, a comparison of the literatures of various peoples shows that they have not developed their narrative material to the same degree.

First: It has been found that not every people is able to produce a great national poem, although it has been in possession of national heroes. Among the Irish, for example, there are cycles of song surrounding the names of Finn and of Cuchullin; but the same lack of unity which caused the people, in their political life, to dissipate their energies in individual efforts, finds a parallel in the lack of any fast-binding unity in their songs.

Secondly: It has not been given to every people to bring forward a national hero. The Bulgarians and the Servians have produced a great body of epic material. The poems of the former, as given in the *Chansons populaires bulgares*, are essentially narrative, and, in many instances, deal with a question of such national interest as the people's struggle

[1] *Ib.*, xxiv.

for independence. As to the Servians, Dozon speaks, in his introduction to the *Chansons*, of one man who had recited to him more than two hundred heroic pieces. But neither of these peoples has a national hero. It is found that where a political development is lacking, as it has been among them, there is lacking also a centralizing figure in their song.

Thirdly: There are people living under conditions of such a nature that they are deprived of all sense of nationality. Under such conditions the narrative songs reproduce those events which are most impressive in daily life. Examples of these songs are to be found among the Southern negroes, where such incidents as a steam-boat race,[1] a horse-race[1], a hanging,[2] or a social party,[2] have been the subjects of their celebration. Again, songs of such a character would naturally be the product of a people which had not yet attained, in its development, to a consciousness of nationality, and was therefore without any material of national interest; we find illustration of these songs among the Ainus, of whom a missionary says:[3] 'I have seen them sit for an hour at a stretch, and relate in chant and song that which has happened to them whilst away; where they have been, what they have seen, and what they have heard.' This even flow of narrative sweeps all manner of incident into its current, without reference to the relative importance of the event or the prominence of the actor. But degrees of development are apparent in this simple form of narrative also. It is the form in which the early history and traditions of the tribes are presented, and these first appear broken and disjointed as the stories of children,[4] but gain coherence with the progress of the people.

The line of continuity, which has been traced from the most advanced to the primitive narrative, would seem to

[1] Brown, *Songs of the Slave, Lippincott's Mag.*, ii.
[2] *Putnam's Mag.*, v, pp. 72 ff.
[3] Batchelor, *Ainu of Japan*, p. 123.
[4] Cf. *infra*, pp. 44, 46, 51.

lead back to a stage of development in which the poetic species are not clearly differentiated, for whenever, in early manifestations, the narrative can be traced to the improvisation in which it originated, it will be found in combination with the lyric and dramatic species.[1] Moreover, this early confusion of type is not confined to the songs of the most primitive races; but wherever a spontaneous expression in song may be found, which has been improvised under the influence of the events that inspired it, the confusion of the epic, lyric, and dramatic elements will appear;[2] although as language develops, and expression becomes more possible in words alone, the dramatic element may be less evident. The field in which epical beginnings are to be sought is limited only by those conditions which replace spontaneity by reflection, the natural, unrestrained expression by that which is in some way modified and restrained.

Following the line of narrative development, we find that it maintains an intimate relation with the political condition of the people.[3] The reason for this relation is clear. The form of the poem depends upon its content, and its content depends upon the thought of the people among whom it is produced. According as their favor is shown towards the universal or the local type, towards central authority or individual independence, the poem will celebrate those persons or events which represent these tendencies; thus the spirit which furnishes a national political centre will furnish also a central ideal or motive for the narrative poem, and that which, politically, finds its expression in democracy, or anarchy, will leave a corresponding impress upon the form of the poem; the transmitted narrative, evolving, as it does, in connection with the national life, is an expression of the same spirit which finds embodiment in the political constitution of the people.

[1] Cf. *infra,* pp. 43 ff., 46 ff., 49 ff.

[2] Cf. *infra,* p. 56 ff., cf., in addition, such examples as Miriam's song of triumph, *Exodus,* xvi, and Mary's hymn of rejoicing, *Luke,* i.

[3] Cf. *supra,* pp. 35 ff.

The parallel between the literature and the politics may be clearly traced where the nation has reached an advanced stage of progress, and where its ideal, as expressed in both, has grown into distinctness of outline; but in the most primitive condition of the savage tribes the ideal has not yet indicated its character. Formlessness is apparent in both literature and government. By a gradual process this formlessness develops into definite shape, and, as its first roughly-defined tendencies appear, they find corresponding literary and political expression.

The purpose of the present study is to follow in some of its phases the development of narrative literature, and to parallel its progress by the development of political life.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Early Forms of Epic Compared with Contemporary Political Forms.

The beginnings of the great epic masterpieces elude our direct observation. The early stages by which the Greek, Sanskrit, Persian, or Babylonian epics progressed towards the form in which they appear are lost in unhistoric time. But as far as we can trace these, or the later Germanic epics, from this direction, they give indications of preceding forms, so that it seems advisable to turn to the earliest conditions in which we can find human beings, and to study the songs produced under these conditions, to see whether in them may be found the germs from which the epic, as a distinct poetic species, develops.

It is a legitimate inference that the stages of development exhibited by barbarous and savage people to-day correspond more or less closely with the primitive life that preceded the civilizations in which the epics were matured. We know that the ancestors of civilized nations were barbarous tribes, and that the epics of civilization send their roots back into barbarism; consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that the same process of development extended through preceding ages, and that the barbaric culture arose out of a ruder savagery, where epic forms existed upon a correspondingly lower plane.

The following classification of the various peoples has been made to simplify this study of epic manifestations, but it is necessarily a loose one, as the transition from clan to tribe, and from tribe to monarchy, is gradual, and it is

frequently difficult to tell under which division a particular people belongs. The scheme of classification is as follows:

I. Unorganized Groups,
II. Clans,
III. Tribes,
IV. Monarchies.

The literature, or song—for they are indistinguishable in their earliest form—has been considered under the headings of improvisations, national celebrations, and popularly transmitted legends. It will readily be seen that these divisions are not exclusive of one another, since improvisations frequently occur in the national celebrations, and also add to the growth of the popularly transmitted songs; moreover, the songs of the national celebrations, if carefully transmitted by an especial caste, may be preserved in the form in which they left the lips of the improvisator, but, if not so preserved, they take on the nature of transmitted legends. Notwithstanding the overlapping of the divisions, however, they represent distinct literary manifestations; the improvisations being produced at all stages of primitive development, and showing the early confusion of the poetic species; the national celebrations showing a transmitted survival of the confusion of poetic types through clan, tribal, and monarchic organizations; and the transmitted legends, since they have defined their character through unrestrained repetition, showing the purest form of the narrative, and, because of their emanation from the mass of the people, adequately representing in their form the common artistic ideals.

In the investigation of the thought and life of the least cultivated of savages, we meet with various difficulties: When we must rely upon the reports of explorers to whom the language of the people is unknown, the songs are of necessity described instead of transcribed, and the general conclusions of the observer frequently seem to be unjustified by his thoroughness of research; then, too, the reports

of the missionaries, which are in many instances most valuable, must be discounted when contempt for pagan practices closes the eyes of the writers to the significance of the ceremonials; moreover, the statements of all classes of investigators must be questioned when they would read their own beliefs into the traditions of the people. The material selected for consideration in this chapter has been chosen with a consciousness of the objections that may be urged against it; but since in most instances it has been regarded by scientific workers as sufficiently accurate to influence anthropological and ethnological conclusions, it seems worth while to examine it, and especially to compare it with that which has been more satisfactorily investigated.

## I. *Unorganized Groups of Men.*

1. Among the lowest of the human race are the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego. Considered from a political standpoint, their rudimentary society acknowledges no chief,[1] and the individuals enjoy perfect equality. Concerning the literature they have produced we know but little, and that little is contradictory. According to all reports they are fond of singing, but we are told by certain travelers that they are content to sing indefinitely a single word or syllable.[2] Mr. Bridges,[3] however, who lived for years among them, mentions a long list of their songs; the *Loima* is the song of a man about to avenge himself, the *Telania* a song of mourning, the *Arua* is the doctor's song, the *Jacous* a song for amusement. There are, in addition, certain songs which he says have no definite import, that are handed down from father to son. They bear such names as *Upoush,* the west wind, *Hahnisaf,* the north sky, *Shucoosh,* the kelp

[1] Fitzroy, *Voyage of Adventure and Beagle,* ii, pp. 178 ff.; cf. Hyades, *Bull. Soc. Anthrop.,* 1887, p. 335; cf. Garson, *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.,* xv, pp. 141 ff.

[2] Hyades, *op. cit.,* p. 330.

[3] *Manners and Customs of the Firelanders* in *A Voice for South America,* xiii, pp. 207, 208.

goose. This testimony, if it refers to the same tribe of Fuegians to which other travelers refer, shows that the monotonous repetition is not the measure of the Fuegian ability to produce song. Nevertheless, the single word deserves attention, since we frequently find that improvisation is of an ejaculatory character, and is limited to a word. The conclusion, however, which has so often been reached as to the exclusively lyrical quality of such an exclamation, is not imperative. The child whose first articulate speech is limited to a word is not necessarily expressing pure emotion; proof of this is furnished by the authentic case of a child whose mother had held him in her arms and had pointed out to him the shining stars; some days passed by, and one night the light within his room recalled what she had told him. In the 'Star! Star!' which were the first words he had uttered, he gave expression to a thought somewhat as follows: 'This is a bright star like those my mother showed me.' In this it is not difficult to see a trace of narrative, and we are justified in assuming that a similar interpretation of the ejaculatory improvisation is admissible.

2. The native inhabitants of southern California were politically on a like plane of development with the Fuegians. The missionary Baegert,[1] who wrote in the second half of the last century, found that they frequently spent whole nights in a performance which combined the dance and the song, but to him the one was 'inarticulate and unmeaning,' and the other was 'foolish irregular gesticulating and jumping.' He reports further that they were without a trace of religion, but Picolo[2] found that they worshiped the moon. The evidence of Picolo makes it seem probable that the all-night performance witnessed by Baegert was not without dramatic significance.

There are still groups of Indians in Central California which remain in a political and social condition very like that described by Baegert. According to Stephen Powers,

[1] *Smithson. Rep.*, 1863-64.
[2] Waitz, *Anthropologie*, iv, p. 250.

the Nishinams probably belong to the lowest grade of California Indians,[1] and they celebrate several fixed dances which are accompanied by songs. These ceremonials, from the description[2] given of them, would seem to be of dramatic character.

3. The fast disappearing Negritos of the Philippine islands are divided into unorganized, shifting groups, like the Fuegians and the Californians.[3] We are told that they combine the dance and the song in their wedding festivals, and also that on the night of the full moon the members of a family assemble about the fire, the men seize their bows and arrows and throw them across their shoulders, and then all the family join in the celebration. In the one song which is given—'We are poor people, and lead a miserable life'—the narrative and lyrical elements are inseparable.

The limited information we possess as to the literature of these Negritos would have little bearing upon the present discussion did it not agree, so far as it goes, with the information obtained concerning the songs of other peoples; but since in other instances it is possible to deal also with several interpretations, and these are all found to contain elements which may be considered the germs of the narrative and the lyric species, and to be accompanied by dances which represent the idea of the songs, even the half interpreted efforts of people upon a corresponding plane are worthy of attention.

4. The wild, or forest, Veddahs[4] of Ceylon combine the dance and the song. In a ceremonial in which they invoke the spirits of their ancestors, they fix an arrow upright in the ground, and, dancing around it, sing:

> My departed one, my departed one, my god!
> Where art thou wandering?

[1] *Tribes of California,* pp. 317 ff. [2] *Ib.,* pp. 325 ff.

[3] Schadenburg, *Zeit. für Ethnol.,* xii, pp. 137 ff.; Blumentritt, *Globus,* 1881.

[4] Bailey, *Trans. Ethnol. Soc.* (Eng.), New Series, ii; cf. Tennent, *Ceylon.*

They place food in a secluded spot and dance about it to the song:

> Come and partake of this!
> Give us maintenance as you did when living!
> Come, wheresoever you may be; on a tree,
> on a rock, in the forest—come!

It does not matter, for our purpose, whether these songs are regarded as improvisations or as fixed celebrations. Moreover, while the form of the translation is suspiciously smooth, it shows the confusion of poetic species; for although the prevailing tone is lyric, there is a glimpse of underlying narrative in the vague recognition of the wandering spirits, and the accompanying dances are evidently propitiatory in their character, and consequently have dramatic significance.

5. The Bushmen of Africa furnish illustration not only of the united dance and song in their communal celebrations, but show also in some transmitted legends the degree to which they have developed their sense of form. For example, among their prominent mythological figures is Kaggen, or Cagn, the creator of all things, who seems to be both a human being and a locust. He threw his shoe into the sky and it became the moon, red because the shoe was dusty with the dust of his country. The moon can speak, because all things which belong to the locust can speak. Cagn enters into many contests with animals, and is often defeated; he fights with a cat, and the cat sings a song about the lynx; Cagn's wings are singed by the mother of the hyena, who tries to roast him; he dips his wings into water, and they are renewed; he fights with the ticks in the fleeces of his sheep; he is swallowed and disgorged by the 'all-devourer'; he enters and returns safe from the body of a elephant; he is killed by the thorns, who were then people; the ants eat him, but his bones are collected, and he is revived; and so he makes his way

through numerous separate incidents which are totally lacking in organic relation to one another.

The lyrical element of these narrative fragments is present in the long soliloquies and conversations of the beasts; and the dramatic element is also unmistakable, in that the story-teller endeavors to impersonate each animal in turn.[1]

## II. *Clans.*

1. The inhabitants of the Andaman Islands give evidence of rudimentary political organization,[2] but, as with all the lowest forms of the human race, it is difficult to determine in what political zone to place them; they have not entirely abandoned the nomadic habit, but they have also permanent encampments;[3] they recognize a nominal chief who organizes meetings between the different communities, but can neither exact obedience nor punish offenders;[4] in their strict regard for the relationship of individuals,[5] they seem to show the beginnings of social organization; they therefore fall, according to our present classification, under the heading of clans, as do the other peoples immediately considered.

The Andamanese are much given to singing, and any passing event, such as a successful hunt, a marriage, or the visit of friends, is celebrated by an entertainment in which all take part.[6] Large entertainments are also organized, to which are invited all groups within easy distance. The subject represented is usually some personal or clan adventure.

[1] Cf. Ratzel, *Hist of Mankind,* ii, pp. 262 ff.; Lang, *Myth. Ritual, and Religion,* ii, pp. 11 ff. For further notes on the Bushmen, see series of articles on *Die Buschmänner in Südafrika, Globus,* xviii, especially pp. 120 ff. and 140 ff.

[2] Man, *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.,* xii, pp. 108 ff.

[3] *Ib.,* pp. 104 ff. [4] *Ib.,* p. 109. [5] *Ib.,* pp. 126 ff.

[6] *Ib.,* pp. 388 ff.; cf. further, St. John, *Trans. Ethnol. Soc.* (Eng.), New Series, v, p. 46, and Colebrook, *Asiatic Researches,* iv, pp. 391 ff.

The song is a fragmentary expression, consisting of recitative followed by a chorus. The dramatic action by which it is accompanied furnishes an essential stimulus to the imagination of the spectators; that it is essential is illustrated in the following example, in which the poet would represent how he, unaided, made a bow:

Leader: You did not make it; I made it.
I, I, I made it.
Chorus: I, I, I made it.[1]

In addition to being of a dramatic character, it is certainly an elementary narrative, colored by the personal feeling of the improvisator.

They have also legends[2] of creation, and these at least

[1] Bucher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus,* p. 54.

[2] Puluga is the Creator of all things. After making the world, he made man—Tomo. Man was black and bearded, but much taller than the present Andamanese. Puluga placed him in the jungle, and warned him not to partake of certain fruits during the rains. Puluga obtained fire for him by stacking in alternate layers two kinds of wood, and then calling the sun to sit on the pile until it was ignited. He taught Tomo to cook pigs, which had in those days neither ears nor noses. According to some he created woman, according to others Tomo found her swimming near his home. As time went on the pigs became so numerous as to be troublesome, and the woman drilled holes into their heads and snouts, that they might avoid danger and get food for themselves. Then they became difficult to catch, and Puluga taught man to make bows and arrows, and to hunt, and afterwards to fish and to build canoes, and then, subsequently, the various arts that the Andamanese practise.

Puluga sent out man's children two by two all over the country, and provided each with a distinct dialect. One day, while hunting, Tomo fell into a creek, and was drowned. He was at once changed into a whale. His wife and some of her grandchildren went in a canoe to search for him. He upset the canoe and they were drowned, and became crabs and iguanes.

The descendants of Tomo, with the exception of two men and two women, were destroyed by a flood. According to one legend it came about in this way: Berebi, who was an envious man, came to visit Kolwot, who was the first to spear and catch turtles. When

partially differentiated narrative chants are characterized by an incoherence somewhat less marked than that of the Bushman legends. They show a greater elaboration of single incidents, and a more apparent chronological connection; but a portion of these results may be due to the unconscious efforts of the translator, for the accounts which he gives in substance appear less broken and disjointed than those which he renders literally. If the advance beyond the legends of the Bushmen is in reality less than it seems, it could affect our conclusions only in so far as it lowered the estimate we place upon the ability of the Andamanese to sustain a thought, for, in the material as it stands, the incidents are, as with the Bushmen,[1] without necessary connection with one another.

2. A blending of narrative, lyric, and dramatic elements is found in the celebrations of the wild people of the Naga hills,

Kolwot appeared, Berebi fastened his teeth in his arm, and was unable to detach them. The tradition is thus preserved:

> Bring the boat to the beach.
> I will see your fine grown-up son,
> The grown-up son who threw the youths, (This refers to another legend.)
> The fine grown-up son.
> My adz is rusty. I will stain my lips with his blood.

The friends of Kolwot avenged him, and threw Berebi's body with his into the water. The mother of Kolwot, enraged at the loss of her son, committed various acts forbidden by Puluga, and incited others to do so. It is expressed thus:

> My grown-up handsome son.
> Burn the wax. (Burnt wax was especially obnoxious to Puluga.)
> Grind the seed of the *chakan.*
> Destroy the *barata.*
> Dig up the *gono.*
> Dig up the *chati.*
> Destroy everything.

Then Puluga was angry and sent the deluge.—Condensed from account by Man, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 ff.

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 44.

on the northeast frontier of India. We are told that there the dramatic element is especially conspicuous. The dances are imitative of such incidents as fights and bear-hunts, or of adventures of a more personal character; one, which is given in outline, reproduces a tragedy.[1] The burden of the song accompanying it is: One day a young man left his love and went into the jungle for cane to make a basket for her; he was devoured by a tiger, and announced his fate to the young woman in a dream. In this the nature of the narrative would seem to require for its dramatic representation a lyrical quality.

The Lepchas, or Rongs, the aborigines of Sikhim, in the southeastern Himalayas, are thought by Mr. Waddell to be outlying members of the Naga group.[2] At any rate, they are people who seem always to have been without coherent political organization.[3] In the songs they have preserved there are archaic[4] words of which they have forgotten the meaning, but there are also evidences[5] of contamination from the Tibetans and Nepalese, among whom they are fast losing their identity, and consequently the songs given can not be said with certainty to represent the people before their contact with a higher civilization. In the one selected, however, Mr. Waddell thought he had an example of uncontaminated production, and it will be seen to combine the narrative and lyrical qualities.[6]

[1] Godden, *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, xxvi, pp. 161 ff.; xxvii, pp. 2 ff.; cf. Woodthorpe, *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, xi, pp. 56 ff.

[2] *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, xii, p. 43.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 47. [4] See below, note 6. [5] *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

O Joy!
The *Kal* Head-Father-Spirit in the olden time
Made the earth. (He) The Sky-Existing One
Made in this tearful world the fields to cover the bosom of the stones.
When the *Sham-man-mi* men were made
And the *Gi* jointed Bamboos and trees, at the same time were we
The sons of the (one-) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs.

3. In the many celebrations of the Hottentots[1] there can be no question as to the dramatic character of the dances. These dances may be either representations of a religious nature, or reproductions of events in daily life. An illustration of the songs used in combination with them is found in a celebration in which the lightning is represented as a woman, and sings the solo parts; the chorus responds, and acts the part of the inhabitants of a kraal, one of whom has been killed by the lightning.[2]

Chorus: Thou, child of the thunder-cloud,
Stepchild of the fire!
Thou, who hast killed my brother!
Behold thee now lying in a pit!
Solo: Yes, it is I who have killed thy brother.

While the dramatic and lyric character of this production is pronounced, the traces of narrative are present also in the recital—'Thou who hast killed my brother,' 'It is I who have killed thy brother.'

4. Sufficient investigation has been made among the Australians to render possible a fair estimate of the character of their literature. We are told that there is scarcely any part of their life which is not in some measure connected with

O Joy!
The *Far-shi-sham* mulberry trees were made,
The rice, the vegetables were made,
The running rivers with the *So-o-re* fishes were made,
The *Sok-o-re* sky-birds were made.
The ground *Bag-dyol* worms,
The *Ku do-ren* insects and the rainbow were made
(All) by our first old great-grandfather.
(But our) *Tsat-sau-dong* troubles were made by our old first great-grandmother.

[1] The Hottentots are classed by Letourneau (*L'évolution politique*, pp. 59 ff.) among the lowest forms of monarchical tribes.

[2] Hahn, *Tsuni-Goam*, p. 131. Cited by Letourneau, *L'évolution littéraire*, p. 56. For other Hottentot songs see Hahn, *Die Nama-Hottentoten, Globus*, xxvi, pp. 161 ff.

song.[1] A whole camp is pictured to us as joining one by one at early dawn in a chorus that describes the bats 'flitting about in the dim light which shows between the upper boughs of the tall trees.' Another favorite song, which the poet composed when going down the coast in his boat, is freely rendered, 'Between the furious wind and the dashing waves of the long-stretched sea I was nearly upset.'

The lack of distinctive character in these songs is further indicated in what is said to represent fairly the improvisation of the successful hunter. His personal gratulation is blended with the story, thus giving it its narrative and lyric tone.

> The kangaroo ran very fast,
> I ran faster.
> The kangaroo was very fat,
> I ate him.
> Kangaroo! Kangaroo![2]

While improvisation is practised by all, those who show especial ability are honored, and their songs, as well as the pantomimic gestures accompanying them, are passed from clan to clan, until the meaning of even the words is lost. It is easy to see how, under these circumstances, the dramatic element disappears; but in both the improvisations and the clan celebrations, the songs, so far as interpreted, bear witness in their narrative and lyrical elements to the early indeterminate form of literature.

The clan celebrations, or corrobories, furnish opportunity, as has been said,[3] for the improvisator, as well as transmit improvisations in fixed form. The following is an illustration of the kind of song used on such occasions:

> Pooraman oro tora tono,[4]
> Plukman holo! Bum! Bum!
> Pooraman oro, Bum! Bum!

The explanation is that some poor black men were cooking

[1] Howitt, *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, xvi, pp. 327 ff.
[2] Oldfield, *Trans. Ethnol. Soc.* (Eng.), New Series, iii, p. 272.
[3] Cf. *supra*, p. 40. [4] Oldfield, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

meat in the embers (Oro tora tono); there is no mention of the fact that the meat had been stolen from a settler, that the authorities had been warned, and that it was a policeman who came upon the thieves and cried out: 'Holo!' and fired at them, the 'Bum! Bum!' of the song. It is easy to see that such omissions render the dramatic element not only important but necessary, and that in the expression of pity for the men the lyrical quality is added to the narrative.[1]

A legend[2] of creation, which comes from central Australia, shows the degree of development to which they have attained in transmitted songs. Dealing with occurrences which suc-

[1] The dramatic element in the corrobory is made clearer in the description given by Oldfield of the reproduction by the Australians of the capture of a whale by a party of whites. The proceeding had been witnessed by an old man who determined to imitate it. They constructed the figure of a whale out of bushes, and the men drove their spears into it as they danced and sang about it, while the women beat time and joined in the songs. Cf. Howitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 332 ff.

[2] According to this tradition, in the early mythical time the country was covered with salt water, which was gradually drawn away towards the north by the people of that region. At this time there dwelt in the western sky two beings called *Ungambikula,* or 'self-existing,' who saw, away in the east, a number of rudimentary or incomplete human beings, called *Inapertwa,* whom they were to fashion into men and women. These *Inapertwa* dwelt in groups along the shore of the salt water; they were merely outlines of bodies, without distinct limbs or organs. The *Ungambikula* came down from their home in the sky, armed with great stone knives. They took hold of the *Inapertwa,* and first they released the arms, then made four clefts at the end of each for fingers; the legs and toes were formed in the same manner. Then a nose was added, and nostrils bored with the fingers, and the mouth was cut open and pulled to make it flexible. The knife separated the upper and lower eyelids, and a few further strokes completed the body. Having finished their work, the *Ungambikula* transformed themselves into little lizards.

The legend does not stop with the retirement of the creators, but continues in an incoherent way to account for certain rites and ceremonies which it finds established among the beings created. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia,* pp. 381 ff.

ceed one another without regard to starting-point, causal connection, or ending, the narrative can not be said to give in itself any indication of a definite ideal of form among the people. It is extended in the disjointed and fragmentary fashion of the narratives of Bushmen[1] and Andamanese[2], and shows that the Australians gave an exemplification of their undeveloped artistic sense in their literary as well as in their political creations.

Similar narratives, which preserve apparent history, survive among peoples more advanced than those whose literature has been examined; however, among such people the growing artistic sense finds expression in a different character of song, so that the formlessness of the historic narrative can not be considered the measure of their artistic ability. With the Australians, Andamanese, and Bushmen, on the other hand, this formlessness marks the limit of their attainment.

5. The songs of the Eskimos deal with all manner of subjects—with myths, traditions, personal experiences, and fictitious occurrences. They are accompanied by imitative gesture, the voices of the singers are modulated to express the feeling of the different persons, and numbers of the tales are onomatopoetic. From these facts it is apparent that the dramatic element is present. As to the lyric and the narrative, while the latter predominates, the lyric element is also clear. It is very apparent, for instance, in the nith-song[3] between Savdlat and Pulangitsissok, which is only

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 44. [2] Cf. *supra*, p. 46.

[3] 'The nith-songs . . . were used for settling all kinds of quarrels, and punishing any sort of crime, or breach of public order or custom, with the exception of those which could be expiated only by death in the shape of the blood-revenge. If a person had a complaint against another, he forthwith composed a song about it, and invited his opponent to meet him, announcing the time and place where he would sing against him. . . . The cheering or dissent of the assembly at once represented the judgment as well as the punishment.'—Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, p. 34.

one of many available examples of improvisation. (The interjectional refrain is omitted.)

*Savdlat.*[1] The south, the south, oh the south yonder! . . . When settling on the midland coast I met Pulangitsissok, . . . who had grown fat with eating halibut. . . Those people from the midland coast they don't know speaking, . . . because they are ashamed of their speech. Stupid they are besides. . . . Their speech is not alike: . . . some speak like the northern, some like the southern; . . . therefore we can't make out their talk.

*Pulangitsissok.* There was a time when Savdlat wished that I should be a good kayaker; . . . that I should take a good load on my kayak. . . . Many years ago some day he wanted me to put a heavy load on my kayak. . . . (This happened at the time) when Savdlat had his kayak tied to mine (for fear of being capsized). . . . Then he could carry plenty upon his kayak, . . . when I had to tow thee, and thou didst cry most pitiful, . . . and thou didst grow afeard, . . . and nearly wast upset, . . . and hadst to keep thy hold by help of my kayak strings.

There are numerous widely-spread traditions among the Eskimos, any one of which might be given as representative, in its form, of the people's artistic ability. Of these traditions, that which relates to Sedna,[2] goddess of the lower world, may be considered typical.

[1] *Ib.*, pp. 67 ff.

[2] Sedna lived quietly with her father, who was an Inung. She was a handsome girl and had many wooers, but she would have none of them. Finally a fulmar flew from over the sea, and wooed her with enticing song: 'Come to me; come into the land of the birds, where there is never hunger, where my tent is made of the most beautiful skins. You shall rest on soft bearskins. The fulmars shall bring you all your heart may desire; their feathers shall clothe you; your lamp shall always be filled with oil, your pot with meat.' Sedna could not resist his wooing, and went with him to his home; but when she came to the country of the fulmar she found that she had been shamefully deceived. Her home was covered with wretched fish-skins, full of holes that gave free entrance to wind and

The story appears in different versions, but when it is given in abridged form the omitted portions are supposed to be familiar to the hearers. It has evidently been subjected to repeated transmissions, and shows in some places a coherence which is not found in the legends[1] already given. This may arise from the fact that among the Eskimos the narrator of the story has only limited discretionary powers; he must keep as close as possible to the original plan,[2] and although he is allowed to insert passages from other songs, he is not allowed to change them. The tendency is to preserve the shape of the recitals unaltered, and this being the case, the efforts of the

snow. Her bed was made of hard walrus hides, and she had to live on miserable fish which the birds brought to her. Too soon she found that she had thrown away her opportunity when in foolish pride she had rejected the Inuit youth. In her woe she sang: 'Aja! O father, if you knew how wretched I am, you would come to me, and we would hurry away in your boat over the waters. The birds look unkindly upon me, the stranger; cold winds roar about my bed; they give me but miserable food. O come and take me back home, Aja!' When a year had passed, the father left his country to visit Sedna. She greeted him joyfully, and besought him to take her home. He killed her husband, the fulmar, and took her away, but they were pursued by other fulmars, who stirred up a heavy storm. The father determined to make an offering of Sedna to the birds, and flung her overboard, but she clung to the edge of the boat. He took a knife and cut off the first joints of her fingers; these, falling into the sea, were changed into whales, and the nails became whalebone. Sedna held on to the boat, and her father cut off the second joints of her fingers, and these swam away as seals; then he cut off the stumps of her fingers; and they became ground seals. The fulmars thought Sedna was drowned, and the storm was allowed to subside. Her father then drew her into the boat. She, however, was unforgiving, and meditated revenge upon him, and when they went ashore she called her dogs, and let them gnaw off his hands and feet while he was asleep. When he awoke he cursed himself, Sedna, and the dogs, and the earth opened and swallowed them all, and they have since lived in the land of Adlivum, of which Sedna is mistress.—Condensed from Dr. Boaz's account, *Ethnol. Rep.*, 1884-85, pp. 583 ff.

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 44, 46, 51.

[2] Rink, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

singer are not dissipated in the expression of vague, indefinitely conceived objects and incidents; they are directed towards the presentation of material which already has its outlines shaped. Consequently a smoothness of narrative is likely to result; but notwithstanding this advantage over the previously considered examples, the story can not be said to develop its incidents because of any inner necessity; their places might equally well be filled by other incidents. The result is that we have not in the recital an organic whole, and it gives no indication of a conception of unity on the part of the people. Moreover, the connection that would seem to be established between the various recitals, through the liberty allowed to the singer of incorporating incidents from other legends, does not interfere with the independence of the songs. Neither individual nor event rises into preëminence, nor does one legend show any tendency to absorb others; they exist in an equality which is paralleled by the equality of the communal life, and the absence of any tendency towards a unifying centre corresponds to a similar condition in the political constitution.[1]

6. It does not lie within the province of this study to examine the many influences which have part in shaping racial characteristics, and which result in certain psychological tendencies that find one means of expression in a predominance of narrative, or of lyric, or of dramatic qualities in the literary productions; but it is of importance to note that whichever may predominate, the composite character of the literary product is still maintained. For example, in contrast with the improvisation of the Eskimo, where the narrative quality prevails, the improvisation of the negroes of the southern part of the United States shows a preference for the lyrical quality, but in neither instance can the songs be distinguished as clearly narrative or lyric.

[1] An illustration of similar tendencies, exhibited upon a much higher plane, is found in the Finnish narrative songs, which maintain their practical independence notwithstanding the scientific forcing that would weld them into the *Kalevala*.

The conditions under which a great portion of the songs of the negroes were produced corresponded, in a measure, to those of communal life. The slaves dwelt in groups on the great plantations before the civil war; the power that governed them was not of them, but external to them; at the same time their interests were one, their pleasures were in common, and their tasks were performed together. The body of song which was the result of this association is still continually increased by the enthusiasm of the improvisator.

In some instances new songs,[1] suggested by their surroundings, have been adapted to the dances evidently brought from their native countries, and the dances, in consequence, have become only markers of rhythm, having lost their old significance; but the dramatic element exists to-day in the improvisations, and when the negroes are carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment and rendered unconscious of foreign scrutiny, they reflect their thought in outward action. This fact finds illustration in a recent song[2] which comes from the neighborhood of Columbia, S. C.

[1] Cable, *Century*, ix, pp. 517 ff. and 807 ff.; cf. Woods, *Native Tribes*, p. 37; cf. *supra*, p. 50.

[2] Got a lettah dis mawnin',
Um-m-m-m,
Could not read dat lettah,
Um-m-m-m,
Took it to my deacon,
Um-m-m-m,
Deacon could not read it,
Um-m-m-m,
Took it to my pastor,
Um-m-m-m,
Pastor could not read it,
Um-m-m-m,
Took it to my Jesus,
Um-m-m-m,
Jesus read dat lettah,
Um-m-m-m,
Lettah read 'bout my soul,
Um-m-m-m,

It was first sung by a convert while giving his experience at a camp-meeting. The lines are not drawn in it between narrative and lyric, and in the facial expression, gestures, and attitude of the improvisator was abundant testimony to the existence of the dramatic element.

The surroundings of the negro have, however, an influence upon the manner in which he presents his product, and an audience which produces self-consciousness in the singer may thrust the dramatic element into the background; but the blended lyric and narrative quality remains, and can be illustrated by numerous examples.[1]

Gospel train a-comin',
Um-m-m-m,
Lettah read 'bout Judgment,
Um-m-m-m,
Sinnah bettah git ready,
Um-m-m-m,
Gospel train a-comin',
Um-m-m-m,
Sinnah bettah git on board,
Um-m-m-m.

Its unlimited possibilities for extension are shown in the addition made to it by the old cook who sang it all the day following its presentation, concluding with:

Come and mix dem cakeses,
Um-m-m-m.

Miss Haskell, *Negro Spirituals, Century,* Aug., 1899.

[1] *Uncle Gabriel* celebrates an impressive event in the experience of Virginia negroes:

O, my boys, I'm bound to tell you; O! O!
Listen awhile and I will tell you, O! O!
I'll tell you little 'bout Uncle Gabriel.
O, boys, I've just begun,
Hard times in old Virginny.

O, don't you know old Uncle Gabriel? O! O!
O, he was a darkey general, O! O!
He was the chief of the insurgents
Way down in Southampton.
Hard times in old Virginny.

A young negro himself speaks in the following story as to the method of improvisation, and endeavors to make clear

It was a little boy betrayed him, O! O!
A little boy by the name of Daniel, O! O!
Betrayed him at the Norfolk landing.
O, boys, I'm getting done,
Hard times in old Virginny.

Says he, 'How d'ye do, my uncle Gabriel?' O! O!
'I'm not your Uncle Gabriel; O! O!
My name it is Jim McCullen;
Some they calls me Archy Mullin.'
Hard times in old Virginny.

They took him down to the gallows, O! O!
They drove him down with four grey horses, O! O!
Brice's Ben he drove the wagon.
O, boys, I'm almost done,
Hard times in old Virginny.

And there they hung him and they swung him, O! O!
And they swung him and they hung him, O! O!
And that was the last of the darkey general.
O, boys, I'm just done,
Hard times in old Virginny.

Brown, *Songs of the Slave, Lippincott's Mag.*, ii, 1868.

The following was used as a rowing song by the negroes in portions of Georgia:

Gen'l Jackson, mighty man,
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away.
He fight on sea and he fight on land,
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away.

Gen'l Jackson gain de day,
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away.
He gain de day in Floriday,
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away.

Gen'l Jackson fine de trail,
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away.
He full um fote wid cotton bale,
Whaw, my kingdom, fire away.

his mental processes: 'Once we boys went for tote some rice, an' de nigger-driver he keep a callin' on us, an' I say, "O de ole nigger-driver!" Den anudder said, "Fust ting my mammy tole me was, notin' so bad as nigger-driver." Den I made a sing, just puttin a word, an' den anudder word.'[1]

It is only in so far as they are improvisations that the songs of the American negroes are important in the present study, since as a people they have had no distinct, continuous existence, and no opportunity to make clear either a political or an artistic ideal.

The following is a corn-shucking song:

Cow boy on middle e' island,
Ho! meleety, ho!
Cow boy on middle e' island,
Ho! meleety, ho!
Missus eat de green persimmon,
Ho! meleety, ho! (*Repeat.*)
Mouf all drawed up in a pucker,
Ho! meleety, ho! (*Repeat.*)
Staid so till she went to supper,
Ho! meleety, ho! (*Repeat.*)

*Putnam's Mag.*, v, pp. 72 ff.

[1] The result was as follows:

Oh, de ole nigger-driver!
Oh, gwine away!
Fust ting my mammy tell me,
Oh, gwine away!
Tell me 'bout de nigger-driver!
Oh, gwine away!
Nigger-driver second devil,
Oh, gwine away!
Best ting for do he driver,
Oh, gwine away!
Knock he down and spoil he labor,
Oh, gwine away!

Higginson, *Negro Spirituals, Atlantic Monthly*, xix.

The association of the peoples so far considered is marked by different degrees of closeness. In some cases there is an embryonic chief[1] who advises rather than commands, and whose wishes may or may not prevail in the council, but as yet there has been no clearly defined political organization of which the characteristics are distinctly marked, nor have the recitals advanced far enough to give clear indication of anything save formlessness in the literature.

### III. *Tribes.*

1. The inhabitants of certain of the Melanesian islands continue to live under political conditions similar to those of the people already examined;[2] but in other of the islands, as in New Caledonia, they have a tribal organization, with a chief at its head, whose power tends toward that of a monarch.

The character of a portion of a people's literature is directly modified by the importance of the tribal chief, for, in addition to the songs that celebrate the common events of life—the hunt, the harvest, the fishing, etc.—are added those which glorify his deeds and the deeds of his ancestors. Such songs are not necessarily removed from improvisation; but it frequently happens that the doings of the chief do not furnish sufficient inspiration in themselves, and then an effort is required satisfactorily to magnify his glory; under these circumstances the poet must fashion his work from the outside, instead of following the leading of the spirit that animates him.

Moreover, under these conditions, the profession of bard becomes important, because, according as the poet is more or less skilful in his panegyrics, he is entitled to remuneration by his master. On the other hand, improvisation by the bard who seeks the favor of his chief is discouraged, because of the disastrous consequences which wait upon

[1] Cf. Letourneau, *L'évolution politique*, p. 60.

[2] For illustrations of their literature see Codrington, *The Melanesians*, pp. 356 ff.

failure. A result of these conditions is the creation of two kinds of literature, one of which tends to be formal, to be manufactured according to fixed rules, to cater to the tastes of a few, and to become less and less representative of the mass; the other, the literature of the people, continues to exist by the side of this artificial product, and, in the form which it assumes, embodies the growing popular ideals.

There is the beginning of this separation in the literature of the Melanesians. The professional bard is established with them, and is remunerated for his services in the celebration of any important event. Training, as well as inspiration, is necessary for his success, since the song-language is distinct from that of ordinary speech, and further, because the songs are composed according to prescribed rules, the successive parts bearing distinct names, and being introduced by a vocal prelude.[1]

The Melanesians have a large body of song which may be classed under the healing of national celebrations. Among these are the initiatory ceremonies of the secret societies. Here the songs and dances are prescribed,[2] and are therefore in an approximately rigid condition. But it is questionable whether these songs were originally improvisations, since much of the other accessible poetry appears also in conventionalized form. Such poetry, however, in the form in which it is presented exhibits a confusion of type. In the following war-chant,[3] which from its nature is a tribal expression, the lyric quality is strong, but the poet is also narrating his vision:

> It is not the pale blood of the trees which will flow to-day;
> It is the red blood of the heart.
> The hurricane lays the grass low; war strikes down the warriors;
> The axe cuts open the skulls; the arrow is buried in the flesh.
> It is war! war!

[1] *Ib.*, pp. 334 ff.
[2] *Ib.*, chaps. v and vi.
[3] Cited by Letourneau, *L'évolution littéraire*, p. 47.

This is a form of narrative which is used by the high masters of epic art; it is the prototype of such visions as Anchises had when from a rising ground on Pluto's plains he showed Aeneas the glory that should henceforth attend the Trojan race;[1] or as Adam saw, when from the highest hill of Paradise he looked down through ages of 'crime-stained' men.[2]

The separation of the Melanesian tribes, and the lack of any communication between them, confine the songs to narrow limits, and render impossible the elevation of any hero common to the islands, even were all the islands in a sufficiently advanced condition to centre their ideals in a hero. A tendency towards such a condition is indicated in a recital which comes from New Caledonia, and commemorates the misfortunes of a chief who had been deposed by the French. It is the representation, in the form of allegory, of a historical experience of the people, and the chief, who stands as the symbol of his tribe, is such by reason of his prominence, and as such turns the historical narrative of tribal life into a personal exploit. This narrative[3] is the work of a special-

[1] *Aeneid,* vi, 757 ff.

[2] *Paradise Lost,* xi, xii.

[3] The following is condensed from the version given by Letourneau, *op. cit.,* pp. 42 ff.:

A chief who had spread his nets in a forest-tree for bats, found there, instead, a white figure in human shape, of which he was afraid, for he knew that it was a genie. 'Deliver me,' it said in a gentle voice. 'I am afraid,' said the chief. 'Deliver me; I will do thee no harm, and will give thee presents.' Then the chief climbed into the tree, but had scarcely set the white spirit free before it leaped upon his back and clasped his neck, crying: 'Descend from the tree and take me to thy home.' 'Yes, but let us walk side by side.' The genie refused, and the chief returned to his hut bearing his burden. There his old mother asked: 'What bringest thou?' and he answered: 'It is without doubt a strange spirit; I know not who he is, nor whence he comes, nor what he wishes. He has hung himself upon my back. Impossible to free myself from him.' 'Enough of words! and give me some food,' said the stranger in a thundering voice. Then he began to eat of the food, without allowing any one else a portion, and while eating he soiled with his

ist, but of a specialist who still speaks and thinks as one of the people; it is not marked by the incoherence of the Bushman, Andamanese, or Australian legends.[1] It may be said, unlike the Eskimo narrative,[2] to show a certain logical sequence in its progress, which is not entirely the result of dealing with an event that has in itself such progressive

saliva the head of the great chief. 'Leave me now,' said the chief to his persecutor. 'Here are bracelets, pearls; take them and return to the place whence thou camest.' Vain prayer! the chief must care for his burden, and as the night came on he lay down with his grievous charge. But when the tyrant slept the chief freed himself from him, and taking his most beautiful arms, his richest bracelet, his red toque, and his aigrette, he ran to ask asylum from an ally. 'Brother, is it thou whom I see?' 'Yes, it is I who wander without asylum. I stretched my net for bats, and found in it an unknown being. I freed him, and he cast himself upon my shoulders. He has eaten my food, he has insulted me and prevented me from eating. I pray thee conceal me.' 'Take a place by my fire,' said the brave ally, 'and fear nothing. We know how to handle a hatchet and to disembowel an enemy. We will await this stranger.' But immediately a frightful hurricane burst upon them. A great cloud hid the horizon; its head was upon the top of the mountains, and its foot was on the plain. Soon they recognized the white spirit, and the chief was asked to take refuge elsewhere. He sought it with one and another; was always welcomed in the same manner, but always pursued, until finally he came to the edge of the island where there was nothing beyond him but the sea. Behind him he saw his terrible persecutor, but on the shore were two children to whom he told his story. 'Follow us,' said the children, 'to the bottom of the sea.' He did so, and found there a magnificent home, full of lizards, iguanes, taros, bananas, and sugar cane, with meat and fish and six young women to serve him. The white spirit could not follow; he could not swim; but he called (all) the birds to him, and ordered them to drink all the water of the sea. The duck drank, drank, drank, drank. The heron drank, drank, drank, drank, and the other birds did the same. Soon the rocks were uncovered; then the dwelling where the chief had sought refuge was disclosed, and the white spirit precipitated himself upon it. But at the moment his head came within the door, the smaller of the two children killed him with a blow of his hatchet.

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 44, 46, 51. [2] Cf. *supra*, pp. 53 ff.

elements, for the ending departs from the actual experience of the people.

2. In the Polynesian archipelago the prevailing political organization is tribal, and the office of chief has become hereditary. Here, as among the Melanesians,[1] the bards constitute a distinct class,[2] trained from childhood in the duties of their position. The language of the ancient songs which they transmit is no longer spoken, and these poems must therefore be largely removed from popular influence. But, although the form of much of the song product has become conventionalized, there is, as among the Melanesians, a body of literature which is being continually increased by improvisation. We are told that everybody sings, everybody improvises, and every occasion or event furnishes an opportunity.[3]

An illustration of the improvisations is found in a song of the Areois:[4] You, light winds from the south and the east, who play lovingly about my head, hasten together to another isle. You will find there one who has abandoned me, seated in the shade of his favorite tree. Tell him that you have seen me in tears because of his absence;[5]—and further, in a recent song, in which the poet relates his escape from drowning:

> Sucked down, down by the waves;
> The words were on everybody's lips—
> 'He lies at the bottom of the sea,
> And life is nearly extinct.'

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 61.

[2] Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*, Introd.

[3] 'They had one song for the fisherman, another for the canoe-builder, a song for cutting down the tree, a song for launching the canoe.'—Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i, pp. 199 ff.

[4] 'They were a sort of strolling players and privileged libertines, who spent their days in traveling from island to island, and from one district to another, exhibiting their pantomimes and spreading a moral contagion throughout society.'—Ellis, *ib.*, pp. 234 ff.

[5] Moerehout, *Voy. aux îles*, i, p. 413. Cited by Letourneau, p. 102.

Yes, my feet pressed the very bottom,
And weeping friends above
Ne'er hoped to see me more!
In truth I had almost gone.[1]

In both examples the narrative and lyric elements exist in an undifferentiated condition, and in each instance they were combined with the dramatic dance.

There is abundant testimony to the confusion of type in the national celebrations. As to the dramatic element, its existence is attested from the various islands. In New Zealand[2] it is illustrated in the war dance, in the brandishing spears and shaking darts, and in the violent motions and hideous contortions that accompany the chant.

Captain Cook[3] bears witness to its existence in the songs at Ulieta, where he was entertained by the performance of wandering minstrels; at Habai,[4] where in one exhibition one hundred and five persons took part; at Tongatabo,[5] at Matavai,[6] and in the Sandwich[7] Islands, where he witnessed similar performances. It is present in songs of more recent composition; it is apparent in the *Day Song for Maaki's Fete,* where the warning birds are represented by six men in masks;[8] it appears in the blackened faces and shaved heads of the mourners, and in the passionate weeping with which the entire assembly closes a crying song; it is shown in the clashing spears and warlike evolutions that accompany the chorus when the war dirge is chanted.[9]

[1] Gill, *Life in Southern Isles,* p. 331.

[2] *Cook, Three Famous Voyages of,* p. 196.

[3] *Ib.,* pp. 115 ff. The subject of the representation was clear from the action. There were a master and his servants on one side, and a company of thieves on the other. The master gave a basket of meat to his servants, which the thieves, after various unsuccessful attempts, stole; the servants, who had fallen asleep, awakened and fell to dancing.

[4] *Ib.,* pp. 689-694. There was also a sort of ballet, in which sometimes women sang and danced, and a chorus of men responded, and sometimes the men were engaged in both the dance and the chorus.

[5] *Ib.,* pp. 709 ff. [6] *Ib.,* pp. 776 ff. [7] *Ib.,* pp. 846-1019.

[8] Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific,* p. 49.

[9] *Ib.,* pp. 270 ff.

In these later compositions, also, the blending of the narrative and lyric with the dramatic element is clear, as it is in the older celebrations where the songs have been preserved.[1]

Even in the transmitted popular legends the narrative and lyric elements are still confused. This is the case in the

[1] It is apparent in the form of prayer that was used in the worship of Tangaroa, before the overthrow of idolatry:

*Intoned by the Priest.*

Speak, thou ancient Tangaroa,
To thy worshipers;
Praise Tangaroa, praise (him).

*People.*

Praise (him), praise (him). Ha! Ha!

*War dance.*

Let the gods speak;
Let the kings rule;
We offer thee worship, O god!

*Intoned by the Priest.*

*Atia* is the original land
From which we sprang.

*Avaiki* is the original land
From which some came.

*Kuporu* is the original land
From which we sprang.

*Vavan* is the original land
From which some came.

*Manuk* is the original land
From which we sprang.

Gill, *Life in Southern Isles*, p. 27.

Interesting parallels to this combination of narrative and lyric elements are to be found in many of the Hebrew Psalms.

great body of historic legends,[1] and it is apparent in the songs of creation.[2]

[1] It finds illustration in the following legend, which describes the catastrophe that preceded the departure of emigrants, perhaps from New Zealand to Hawaii:

The great forests of *Tapa-pala* have been burned; the rocks even have been set on fire. The land of *Toua-Ehu* was a desert; the bird perched upon the rocks of *Ohara-hara.* For eight days and eight nights those who till (the soil) were out of breath, wearied with planting the herbs, prostrate under the sun. They looked around them with dread, etc.

Then turning to the islands of refuge, the song continues:

O, Touai, Touai, how dear thou art! Land in the midst of the sea, thou reposest peacefully on the bosom of the waters and turnest thy face to the soft winds, etc.

Then again, the narrative is resumed:

The sea was the way by which to reach the sandy shore of *Taimou.* The path was hidden:—*Kiroea* was hidden by the storm; *mou.* The path was hidden:—*Kiroea* was hidden by the storm; flames.—Lesson, *Les Polynésiens,* ii, p. 185. Cited by Letourneau, p. 101.

[2] As illustrated in the following:

In the beginning, space and companions.
Space was the darkest heaven.
*Tanaoa* (Darkness) filled and dwelt in the whole heavens,
And *Mutuhei* (Silence) was entwined above.
There was no voice, there was no sound;
No living things were moving.
There was no day, there was no light—
A dark black night.
O, *Tanaoa* he ruled the night.
O, *Mutuhei* was a spirit pervading and vast.
From within *Tanaoa* came forth *Atea* (Light),
Life vigorous, power great;
O, *Atea* he ruled the day,
And drove away *Tanaoa.*
Between Day and Night, *Atea* and *Tanaoa,*
Sprang up wars, fierce and long.
*Atea* and *Tanaoa,* great wrath and contention.
*Tanaoa* confined, *Atea* soared onward.
*Tanaoa* dark as ever,
*Atea* very good and very active.

The Polynesian mind is here actively peering into mysteries, questioning and creating; it is not restricted in its workings to the rudimentary outlines of Eskimo[1] thought, but neither has it yet arrived at clear, definite ideas. It is still floundering among indistinct images; it has not learned to concentrate itself upon particular conceptions, and to

> From within *Atea* came forth *Ono* (Sound);
> O, *Ono* he ruled the sound and broke up *Mutuhei* (Silence).
> Here a great division was made in the
> Company of *Atanua* (Dawn).

Here the song tells of the marriage of Atanua and Atea, Dawn and Light. Then Atea and Ono take on additional significance, they pass onward, pass upward:

> *Atea* the body, *Ono* the spirit,
> *Atea* with *Ono* in one place.
> . . . . . .
> They two the same glory,
> *Atea* the substance, *Ono* the . . . . ,
> And dwelt as kings in the most beautiful places,
> Supported on thrones, large, many-colored, wondrous.
> They dwelt above, they dwelt beyond,
> They ruled the space of heaven,
> And the large powers thereof,
> The first lords dwelling on high.

Then follows a lyrical apostrophe to the thrones, and after that the relation of the riches of the fair Atanua (Dawn) and her victory over Tanaoa (Darkness).

Then to Atea and Atanua is born a son:

> O the great prince, O the sacred superior!
> O the princely son, first-born of divine power!
> O the lord of everything, here, there, and always!
> O the lord of the heavens and the entire sky!
> O the princely son, first-born of the exalted power!
> O the son equal with the father, and with *Ono,*
> Dwelling in the same place!
> Joined are they there in the same power,
> The father, *Ono,* and the son.

The poem closes with a glorification of the three in one.—Fornander, *The Polynesian Race,* i, pp. 214 ff.

[1] Cf. *supra,* p. 53.

separate from those conceptions the half-thoughts that crowd around them. The poet starts to narrate an incident, and is carried away from his direct purpose by a distracting half-vision of the grandeur of his theme. In this helpless state his expression is vague and incoherent, since the poetic form can manifest only such a degree of clearness as the mind has been able to master.

The transmitted legends of the Polynesians are not, however, limited to such suggestive but formless narratives. It is attested from personal observation[1] that they celebrate in their songs the deeds of their heroes and tribal chiefs; a testimony to the fact that the narrative shows an advance in form beyond that of any so far considered,[2] unless it be the narrative of the New Caledonians,[3] where similar political conditions existed. It shows a correspondence in the tendencies of the literary and of the political life to raise the individual above the mass.

3. The Indians of North America, when we first have definite knowledge of them, are at different stages of development; clans are growing into tribes, and tribes are uniting into confederations, but the general tendency is toward an aristocratic form of government. The literature that corresponds to these conditions is of a diversified character, but, so far as it falls within the scope of this study, will be considered under the three headings already employed.

Examples of recent improvisation are furnished in the songs that form a part of the ghost dance.[4] These songs

[1] Ellis, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 198 ff.; iv, pp. 101, 105.

[2] Cf. *supra*, pp. 44, 46, 51,

[3] Cf. *supra*, pp. 62 ff.

[4] It began to attract attention in 1890, but had been in existence previous to that time. The prophet, who rose from the Paiutes, professed to have received certain inspirations.

The Indians, in common with many other people, had long been looking for a Messiah, who should restore their inheritance, re-stock their hunting grounds, and bring back again all their happy past. The Paiute prophet made no claim to be such a Messiah, but he did claim to have received a divine revelation; beyond this his honors were thrust upon him.

are widely representative, since they are the contributions of the many tribes through which the ceremonial spread. They are of a fragmentary nature, and depend upon the dramatic element for as much coherence as they show. In character they are similar to the improvisations examined from other sources.[1] The lyric and narrative elements exist in them undifferentiated. The song is usually a descriptive narrative, conveyed in the form of a vision, and thus colored by the emotional condition of the singer.[2]

In his revelation he claimed also to have received a certain ritual, which he taught. As belief in him and his mission spread, other tribes adopted his ceremonial, but supplemented it with songs of their own. The participants in the dance fell into trances, and had communication with the spirit-world, and any one was privileged to tell his experience in song. Thus they had, besides the songs that were a regular part of the ceremonial, others which survived or disappeared according as they did or did not find favor.—Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion, Ethnol. Rep.* 1892–93.

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 46, 50, 53, 56, 59, 64.

[2] The Paiute songs show the least development; the following fairly represents them:

The wind stirs the willows,
The wind stirs the willows,
The wind stirs the willows.
The wind stirs the grasses,
The wind stirs the grasses,
The wind stirs the grasses.
The whirlwind! the whirlwind!
The whirlwind! the whirlwind! (*Repeat.*)
The snowy earth comes gliding,
The snowy earth comes gliding. (*Repeat.*)

In their opening song the Sioux stood with hands outstretched towards the west, whence was to come the new spirit-world the Messiah had promised them. They sang:

The father says so—Éyayó!
The father says so—Éyayó!
The father says so,
The father says so.

You shall see your grandfather—Éyayó!
You shall see your grandfather—Éyayó!
The father says so,
The father says so.

As to the songs which are used in the national celebrations, and have fallen into a certain degree of ritualistic rigidity,

You shall see your kindred—Éyayó!
You shall see your kindred—Éyayó!
The father says so,
The father says so.

And again they express the hope of the people that the dead shall come back and the buffalo be plentiful. The message is brought by their sacred birds:

The whole world is coming,
A nation is coming, a nation is coming,
The eagle has brought the message to the tribe.
The father says so, the father says so.
Over the whole earth they are coming,
The buffalo are coming, the buffalo are coming,
The crow has brought the message to the tribe.
The father says so, the father says so.

The Kiowas summarized their hope in a similar song, also stretching out their hands towards the west whence the father was to come:

The father will descend,
The father will descend;
The earth will tremble,
The earth will tremble;
Everybody will arise,
Everybody will arise.

And in another, looking towards the return of the buffalo and the resurrection of the dead:

The spirit host is advancing, they say,
The spirit host is advancing, they say,
They are coming with the buffalo, they say,
They are coming with the buffalo, they say,
They are coming with the (new) earth, they say,
They are coming with the (new) earth, they say.

In this song the Caddos looked forward to the reunion of the living and the dead in the great village of the father:

Éyehé! Nánisána,
Eyehé! Nánisána,
Come on, Caddo, we are all going up,
Come on, Caddo, we are all going up,
To the great village—Hééyé!
To the great village—Hééyé!

they are also found to present similar characteristics with

With our father above,
With our father above where he dwells on high—Héeyé!
Where our father dwells—Héeyé!
Where our father dwells—Héeyé!

In a song of the Arapahoes, the crow, the sacred messenger, had led the spirits to the edge of the shadow-land, and there before them stretched the sea, while beyond it lay the land of the living. According to the interpretation, the crow took up a pebble in his beak and dropped it into the sea, and it became a mountain, across which he brought his spirit-army again to the edge of the water. Then, taking up some dust, he flew across the water and dropped the dust, and an arm of land reached to the earth. And again he flew across with some blades of grass, and the land was covered with sod; and again with some twigs, and a forest of trees grew up. And then he marshaled his spirit-host, and crossed over to the boundary of the earth. The song is:

The crow is making a road,
He is making a road;
He has finished it,
He has finished it;
His children,
His children,
Then he collected them,
Then he collected them.

In another Arapaho song the Messiah addresses his children:

My children, my children,
It is I who wear the morning star on my head.
It is I who wear the morning star on my head,
I show it to my children,
I show it to my children,
Says the father,
Says the father.

The Cheyennes have incorporated the white man's Devil in a song:

The devil—Hí hí haí—yaí!
The devil—Hí hí haí—yaí!
We have put him aside—Hí hí haí—yaí!
We have put him aside—Hí hí haí—yaí!
The White Man Above—Hí hí haí—yaí!
The White Man Above—Hí hí haí—yaí!
He is our father—Hí hí haí—yaí!
He is our father—Hí hí haí—yaí!
He has blest us—Hí hí haí—yaí!
He has blest us—Hí hí haí—yaí!

those already examined;[1] the dances are dramatic, imitating the events that are celebrated in the songs, and supplementing the broken narrative. This is shown in the seventeen known Navajo ceremonials, where, we are told, masquerade, dance, and song are constituent elements.[2] The same composite character is to be seen in the snake dance,[3] in the war dances,[4] in the arrow dance,[5] and throughout the great variety of such public exhibitions.

A fair illustration of the character of the songs used on such occasions is afforded by the mountain chant of the Navajos. It is the dramatization of the story of Reared-Within-the-Mountain, a young Navajo who was captured by the Utes, but escaped from them by the intervention of the gods. His homeward journey was made under divine guidance, and his experiences were initiatory rites of a religious character, which he was enjoined to give his people. Having done so, he went away to be with the gods.

Each of the nine days which the ceremonial occupies is devoted to the presentation of his adventures, a presentation which is made more vivid by the use of sand-pictures.

The coming of the new earth, and the noise it makes in its approach, is referred to in the following:

Our father has come,
Our father has come;
The earth has come,
The earth has come;
It is rising—Éyéyé!
It is rising—Éyéyé!
It is humming—Ahééyé!
It is humming—Ahééyé!

Mooney, *op. cit., The Ghost-Dance Religion.*

[1] Cf. *supra,* pp. 43, 49, 50, 61, 65.

[2] Matthews, *Navajo Legends,* pp. 44 ff.—The maskers do not speak, but utter a cry and perform certain actions peculiar to the god represented.

[3] Fewkes, *Ethnol. Rep.,* 1894-95.

[4] Schoolcraft, *Hist. of Indian Tribes in the United States,* ii, p. 60.

[5] Posnett, *Comparative Literature,* p. 119.

The songs are very numerous, and, so far as recorded, are divided into thirteen sets, with from seven to twenty-six songs in a set. These must be presented according to a certain sequence, although the story can not be said to progress. They retain the indeterminate character of improvisations, either because they have been so strictly guarded in their transmission, or because they are the expression of what are still incomplete thoughts in the minds of the priests.[1]

[1] For a full account of this ceremonial, see Matthews, *Ethnol. Rep.*, 1883-84.

In the first song of the first dancers a god is speaking, the place where the Navajo emerged from the lower world 'looms up,' and black, blue, yellow, and white indicate the topographical position of the four mountains surrounding it.

Place-whence-they-came-up looms up,
Now the black mountain looms up,
The tail of the yellow-wing looms up,
My treasure, my sacrifice, loom up.

Land-where-they-moved-out looms up,
Now the blue mountain looms up,
The tail of the hen-hawk looms up,
My treasure, my sacrifice, loom up.

Place-whence-they-came-up looms up,
Now the yellow mountain looms up,
The tail that is yellow looms up,
My treasure, my sacrifice, loom up.

Land-where-they-moved-out looms up,
Now the white mountain looms up,
The tail of the magpie looms up,
My treasure, my sacrifice, loom up.

The daylight songs are sung just at dawn, before the dance ceases. The Daylight Boy and the Daylight Girl are the dawn god and goddess:

The curtain of daybreak is hanging,
The Daylight Boy (it is hanging),
From the land of day it is hanging;
Before him, as it dawns, it is hanging,

As to the narrative which has been subjected to popular transmissions, it is illustrated in the cycle of legends that grew up around the name of Hiawatha. In this leader the

Behind him, as it dawns, it is hanging;
Before him in beauty it is hanging,
Behind him in beauty it is hanging.
From his voice in beauty it is hanging.

The Daylight Girl (it is hanging),
From the land of the yellow light it is hanging; etc.
(substitute *her* for *him* and *his.*)

The following are some of the songs which deal with the experiences of the hero. While fleeing from his pursuers he was saved by a black mountain sheep which is supposed to be speaking:

He stands high upon it,
Now the Holy Young Man
With the great plumed arrow,
Verily his own sacred implement,
His treasure, by virtue of which he is truly holy.

The Young-Women-Who-Become-Bears are important characters, four of whom he met while on his travels:

The-Maid-Who-Becomes-a-Bear walks far around
On the black mountains, she walks far around.
Far spreads the land, it seems not far (to her);
Far spreads the land, it seems not dim (to her).

The-Holy-Young-Woman walks far around
On the blue mountains, she walks far around.
Far spreads the land, it seems not far (to her);
Far spreads the land, it seems not dim (to her).

Maid-Who-Becomes-a-Bear sought the gods and found them,
On the high mountain peaks she sought the gods and found them,
Truly with my sacrifice she sought the gods and found them.
Somebody doubts it, so I have heard.

Holy-Young-Woman sought the gods and found them,
On the summits of the clouds she sought the gods and found them,
Truly with my sacrifice she sought the gods and found them.
Somebody doubts it, so I have heard.

Indians possessed a hero whose real character was of a nature to arouse grateful enthusiasm and to awaken national reverence. He was remembered among many of them as the author of the great peace which lasted among the confederated Iroquois for three centuries;[1] but it was through the promise which, tradition says, he made when he went away, that his memory was especially cherished, for he said that he would come again when his people had most need of him. To the devotees of the ghost-dance his promise seemed fulfilled in the coming of the prophet of the Paiutes.

In the legends that relate to Hiawatha's life we have the beginning and end of a possible epic. He first appeared in a snow-white canoe, on the shore of Lake Ontario; he ascended the river at Oswego, removing from his way all that obstructed it, whether of a natural or of a supernatural character. The end came as he stood in the midst of the chiefs after the League had been established. He knew that he was called away, and, having spoken words of counsel to his fellows, he ascended to heaven in his white canoe, amid 'the sweetest melody of celestial music'.[2] Other incidents of his life are given in legend; they are contributed from different tribes, and give testimony to the national interest he aroused; they are not presented in connected shape, but neither are they wholly urelated, and their existence is a testimony to the Indian's growing conception of unity in his literature—a conception which is in harmony with his efforts towards unity in his political organization.

We have found that those peoples which have advanced beyond the clan into the wider tribal organization have made a corresponding advance in their literature. Where they have shown a tendency to separate the individual from the mass, and to raise him to a position of prominence and

[1] Hale, *Iroquois Book of Rites*, pp. 32 ff.
[2] *Ib.*, Appendix, note D.

responsibility in the political life, they have also manifested the same tendency in the selection of representative figures for the subjects of their songs.[1]

## IV. *Monarchies.*

The body of more or less artificial poetry, which is produced by a savage race by the time it has reached a monarchical phase of development, may crowd into the background the popular song, and render an investigation of its form difficult. The royal court is the centre of the national life, and the royal master has his retinue of minstrels, whose first duty is to celebrate his exploits. It is the songs of these minstrels which are most accessible in the savage kingdoms, but they can not always be considered the embodiment of the people's artistic conception; for such poets have become courtiers; they are no longer the mouthpiece of the mass, but deliberately fashion their work to please an individual. The nature of at least a portion of their poetic creations is indicated by the epithets bestowed upon the autocratic Zulu king in a song in which he is celebrated for his preëminent strength, courage, and riches, and for his ability to crush the heads of other kings. He is called 'Liberator', 'Pillar', 'Bird of the Morning', 'The Purple Dawn of the Morning', the 'Only One Issuing Commands'.[2]

The popular song continues, however, among monarchic peoples, by the side of the artificial product, and the existence of improvisation and its composite character are attested by such songs as that which Mungo Park[3] heard the African women singing in the hut, after they had ministered to his wants:

[1] Cf. *supra,* pp. 62 ff., 69, 75 ff.

[2] Shooter, *Kafirs of Natal,* pp. 310 ff.

[3] Cited by Jones, *Africa,* p. 45; cf. Burton, *A Mission to Gelele,* i, pp 46, 51, 171, 213.

The winds roared and the rains fell;
The poor white man, faint and weary,
came and sat under our tree;
He has no mother to bring him milk,
no wife to grind his corn.[1]

Moreover, certain of the songs which are carried in the memories of the wandering minstrels seem to preserve the character of improvisations. We are told of one in which the singer crawled on his hands and knees 'round and round, stealthily looking this side and that, giving the peculiar leopard-questing cough, and making the leopard mark in the earth with his doubled-up fist'.[2] The dramatic element is clear, but as to the presence of the narrative or of the lyrical quality, we have only, as is usual in similar cases, the description from which to determine it.

1. The national celebrations of the monarchical peoples preserve the combination of song and dance which has been found in the national celebrations of the less advanced peoples. In the West African monarchy of Dahomey they are found in the terrible butcheries attendant upon the Grand[3]

[1] He had been prohibited by the King of Bambara from crossing the Niger, and had been ordered to a distant village. Having gone there, he found that none of the natives would receive him into their houses. 'Faint and weary', and unsheltered from the storm, he was preparing to lodge in the branches of a tree, when a woman, returning from her work in the field, invited him to her hut for food and shelter.

[2] These ministrels go about carrying a song-net, to which is tied all manner of things, and each object has its especial song. To one was tied a human hand and a human jaw-bone. It was the human-hand song in which the singer imitated the leopard movement.—Mary H. Kingsley, *West African Studies*, pp. 140 ff.

[3] Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of West Africa*, pp. 121 ff.

A Grand Custom is held after the death of a king. The sacrifice of human beings is to provide attendants for the dead monarch that he may continue to live in exalted state 'in Dead-land.' 'At a Grand Custom held in 1701 for Adanzu II, five hundred victims are said to have been sacrificed.' Other instances are given, which fall within the present century, where the number of victims is said

Customs; they are also a part of the Annual Customs,[1] and in the Yam,[2] or Harvest, Custom the ceremonies are mixed with the rites of phallic worship. The dramatic character of the exhibitions is apparent at first glance, and the blending of the lyric and the narrative in the songs is clear.[3]

to be greater, but is not definitely stated. Cf. Forbes, *Dahomey and the Dahomans*, ii.

[1] Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-138.

The Annual Custom is designed for the purpose of sending periodically fresh supplies of victims to the dead kings.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 90.

The Yam, or Harvest, Custom is a festival held as a thanksgiving to the gods for having protected and matured the yam crop.

[3] An illustration of the celebrations, selected from among many which might be given, is to be found in the oath-taking ceremony of the Amazon army. The king sits on his war-stool, and the Amazon regiments are bivouacked near by. A herald calls:

Ah! Haussoo-lae-beh, Haussoo!
Oh, King of Kings!

A regiment advances before the throne, salutes, and an officer steps forward and swears in the name of the regiment, that if they go to war they will conquer or die.

Have we not conquered all the province of Mahee?
So will we always conquer or die.

Then a second officer comes forward and says:

When the Attahpahms heard we were advancing, they ran away,
If we go to war and any return not conquerors, let them die.
If I retreat, my life is at the King's mercy.
Whatever the town to be attacked, we will conquer or bury ourselves in its ruins.

Then a third comes forward and says:

We are eighty, and of the right brigade, never yet known to turn our backs to the enemy.
If any one can find fault with us, young or old, let us know it.

Then the Amazons sing in chorus:

We marched against Attahpahms as against men.
We came and found them women.
What we catch in the bush we never divide.

They salute the king, and the regiment marches off to be followed by other regiments in their turn.—Forbes, *op. cit.*, pp. 106 ff.

2. In what are regarded as the most ancient ceremonials of the Peruvians, the union of song and dance is preserved. They are combined in the feast of the Sun, which was the greatest Peruvian festival, and here the dances are described by Garcilaso de la Vega[1] as being of different fashion, because of the 'several insignia, masks, and dresses used by each nation'. Moreover, in the stately dance of the Incas we are told that the king himself took part, and joined in the accompanying songs which praised his famous ancestors.[2] Again, it was the custom[3] of the people to go out with dance and song to meet returning conquerors; after worship and thanks in the temple of the Sun, they all went to the principal square of the city, where each tribe in turn rose up and danced and sang before the king according to the fashion of its country.

Whatever may have been the original dramatic significance of these dances, however, it was probably forgotten in the time of Garcilaso, for at that time their form was absolutely fixed,[4] while the body of songs used on such occasions was continually increased through the efforts of the professional poets. The poetry of the Peruvians, of which he tells us, had attained a maturity in which special forms were distinguished and cast in special molds. Tragedies and comedies were presented before the king on great festivals; the tragedies dealing with the triumphs and grandeur of former kings and other heroic men, the comedies confining themselves to agricultural and household subjects. The poets were skilful in different measures, and discriminating in giving the song appropriate accompaniment. Thus, we are told,[5] 'they did not play the songs composed to celebrate their warlike deeds, because they were not fit to play before ladies, nor to *express on their flutes*; but they were sung at their principal festivals in memory of their victories'.

As to their traditions, they were put into narrative form by the learned men, and were 'told to the children and the

[1] *Commentaries,* ii, pp. 155-167. [2] *Ib.,* ii, pp. 420 ff.
[3] *Ib.,* ii, pp. 145 ff. [4] *Ib.,* ii, p. 420. [5] *Ib.,* i, pp. 193 ff.

youths, and to the common people; so that by passing from one to another they might be preserved in the memories of all'.[1]

Garcilaso himself tells us that he obtained the material of his history chiefly from the orally transmitted traditions of his mother's people, and he gives a pathetic picture of the vanquished Incas who frequented his mother's house, and told over again and again the origin of their race and the grandeur of their empire. 'They omitted nothing', he says, 'relating to the flourishing period of their history'; then, turning to their present condition, 'they mourned for their dead kings, their lost rule, their fallen state', and always concluded their recitals 'with tears and mourning, saying, "We are turned from rulers into vassals"!'

An examination of Garcilaso's History shows that there was an unmistakable centering of events about the figures of the kings; the incidents in the lives of each were recorded by the poets. But there was, beyond this, a tendency to refer to the first Inca as the source of the empire's greatness. No laws were instituted or ceremonies ordained that did not look to him for their origin;[2] we are told in different traditions how he introduced certain fashions and customs;[3] again, when he heard his father, the Sun, calling him away, how he gave to his chief vassals the use of his royal name that they might be known and honored by all as his sons;[4] again the details are given of his death, and his wise words of advice; then the many days of mourning that followed are described, together with the worship he received from the people, to whom he was lord of all earthly things.

While these traditions were preserved by a distinct caste, the method of their preservation did not necessarily demand for them rigidity of form, although it must have restrained them within certain limits.[5] Thus we find that the legends

[1] *Ib.*, ii, pp. 124 ff.

[2] *Ib.*, i, pp. 132 ff. [3] *Ib.*, i, pp. 84 ff. [4] *Ib.*, i, p. 88.

[5] *Ib.*, ii, pp. 124 ff. The Quipus, or knotted strings, recorded events in their order, and what the knots were unable to record was cast into verse and orally transmitted.

relating to the origin of the Incas, which came from different provinces in the empire, although varying in particulars, yet show substantial agreement.[1]

It would seem that these legends were transmitted by both populace and artists, and that they lie within both the natural and the artificial zones, but the inclination to exalt a central hero represents a common tendency.

In the representative character of the hero, in his nationalization, the Peruvians show an advance in their narrative

[1] There were three legends respecting the origin of the Incas, but they all united in celebrating the same man as the first of the kings. The one given by Garcilaso had been preserved in the royal family, and was told to him by one of the royal blood. According to it, 'Our Father the Sun' looked down and saw the human race living like wild beasts in caves and clefts of the rocks, or in caverns underground. They were without religion or government, or town or house; they knew nothing about cultivating the land, or of clothing their bodies; they ate herbs and roots and fruits, and also human flesh; they lived in herds, like deer or other game, and knew not separate wives.

Our Father the Sun had compassion on them, and sent down from heaven a son and a daughter to give them precepts and laws, to instruct them in knowledge of Him, to make of them rational beings instead of beasts.

Our Father the Sun placed his two children in Lake Titicaca, and gave them a sceptre of gold. He told them they might go where they pleased, but wherever they ate or slept they were to thrust the sceptre into the ground. Where it should sink down and disappear, there it was his desire that they should remain and establish their court. He enjoined upon them to make of themselves a likeness and reflection of Him; as He went over the earth each day, giving light, warmth, and increase, they were to become sustainers and benefactors to the people they should overcome.

After much traveling the children of the Sun came to the valley of Cuzco, and there, on a hill, the sceptre of gold buried itself in the ground, and was never again seen.

From this point the first rulers set out in different directions to call the people together; they told how they had been sent and why, and the people believed them and worshiped them, and obeyed them as kings, and set out to follow them wheresoever they might lead.

over the songs transmitted by less developed peoples.[1] Their hero is no longer one among many individuals, about each of whom dangle freely separate incidents that are without organic relation; nor does he share his prominence with others; he has become preëminent, and there is a certain logical sequence in the development of the events that center about him. In the celebration of Hiawatha[2] the North American Indians show a tendency to acknowledge a representative hero, but in the celebrations of the first Inca this representative character is intensified; he is the founder of the nation, and the source of all its customs and laws; he has drawn to himself the glories of his successors, and has been elevated into a national ideal.

3. The national observances of the Mexican monarchies united the dance and the song, involving sometimes in the ceremony many thousands of men.[3] A similar combination is to be found to-day in the united dance and song with which the people in the Mexican villages commemorate the

Then the princes showed the people how to build the city of Cuzco, and how to cultivate the ground, how to make the necessary implements, how to construct irrigating canals, how to weave and to sew and to make clothing; in fine, they were taught everything that is useful in life. The Inca was king and master of the men, his wife was queen and mistress of the women.

The Indians who had been brought under their rule went out themselves into the mountains and wildernesses, and spread the news of the children of the Sun, and the wild people came in great numbers to serve and to obey them.

Then the Inca taught the people to make and to use arms, and he extended his empire in all directions by conquest, and built up villages within his domain.

'These were our first Incas and kings, who appeared in the first ages of the world, from whom descended the other kings who have ruled over us, and from these again we are all descended.'—Condensed from *Commentaries,* i, pp. 63 ff.

[1] Cf. *supra,* pp. 44, 46, 51, 53, 62.

[2] Cf. *supra,* pp. 75 ff.

[3] Sahagun, *Hist. générale des choses de la Nouvelle Esp.,* p. 867. Cited by Brinton, *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry,* Introd.

deeds of saints and Biblical characters instead of the old gods and heroes.[1] It is evident that the songs used in the celebrations centered about prominent figures, and that these celebrations retained the mixed character which has been found in the performances of more primitive peoples.

The professional poets in Mexico were subjected to the strictest discipline,[2] and a body of polished, artificial poetry was the result. A division is made by Sahagun between this poetry and that which seems to be of a popular character; he tells us that the more important songs were written down in their books and taught to the youth in the schools, but the composition of ordinary poets was only disseminated orally.[3]

We have not, however, been able to obtain a definite conception of the stage of artistic development to which the

[1] In the Introduction to *The Gueguence,* Brinton cites the historian, Fernandez de Oviedo, who was in Nicaragua in 1592, as authority for statements as to the dramatic representations of the natives.

In 1856 Don Jose Antonio Urrutia wrote also: 'In most of the Indian towns the custom is still general of preserving a knowledge of great events in their history by means of representations called *bailes,* which are, in fact, dances in the public squares on the days or evenings of great solemnities.' — Cited by Brinton, *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry,* Introd.

[2] Not only the rulers, but the chief men of the nobility maintained their company of dancers and singers, and took a personal interest in their proficiency. We are told that 'did any one of the choir sing falsely, a drummer beat out of tune, or a dancer strike an incorrect attitude, the unfortunate artist was instantly called forth, placed in bonds, and summarily executed the next morning.'— Brinton, *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry,* Introd.

Prescott tells us of a general board of education to which must be submitted all works of science or art before they could be made public. On stated days competitors appeared before the board, and to the successful one was awarded a prize. A wilful perversion of historical truth was made a capital offense.—*Conquest of Mexico,* i, p. 172.

[3] Cited by Brinton, *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry,* Introd.

people brought the popular song. It is possible to cull out from the *Popol Vuh,* that oldest monument of their literature, connected stories of individuals and of events, as is the case with the sacred writings of other nations, but, as a whole, it can not be considered as representative of the people's later ideals, since it was preserved by a sacerdotal class, with as little alteration as possible. Our knowledge of the body of the popularly transmitted poetry among the Mexicans is too limited to warrant anything further than very general conclusions.

It is evident that a study of the literary manifestation of the primitive monarchical peoples is unsatisfactory, if it is undertaken for the purpose of following the growth of popular poetry. As has been said, among such peoples literature has attained to a certain degree of artificiality, and the natural song retires into obscure places, and is scarcely yet known except by description. While this is the case, in the limited data available there are decided indications of an increased tendency to create a national centre in their narrative literature, as they have done in their political constitution; but even if there were no data at hand, such a result might be inferred from the steady progress in that direction which marks the successive phases of preceding political development, and the inference would find further confirmation in the songs produced by the different portions of the Germanic race.

From the facts presented, the following conclusions seem warranted:

1. In its beginnings literature does not exhibit a differentiation of the specific forms. The germs of narrative, lyric, and dramatic poetry may be traced to the first undefined literary product.[1]

2. The confusion of type is not confined to the improvisations of the most primitive peoples. It is a characteristic of

[1] Cf. *supra,* pp. 43 ff., 45 ff., 49 ff., 53 ff.

literary beginnings, whether among primitive or advanced peoples.[1]

3. There is a close correspondence between the tendency shown in the natural development of the form of narrative literature, and the form of the political constitution, since both are an expression of the people's ideal, and the direct creation of the people's spirit.[2]

4. The earliest literary product is a disjointed and formless manifestation,[3] parallel in its indistinctness to the indefinite organization of the clan. As the people advance towards the more centralized tribal organization, and recognize a political head, they manifest also a tendency to elevate certain representative figures in their legends.[4] When a consciousness of nationality has been aroused, and the tribes have found a basis for unity, this unity finds expression in a national ideal in their songs.[5] The progress of the narrative is from a formless expression, without plan or predominating incident or figure, towards a form in which a plot is developed, and in which incidents and figures group themselves with reference to their relative importance to a central idea or hero.

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 56 ff., 61 ff., 64 ff., 69 ff., 78.
[2] Cf. *supra*, pp. 60, 76, 85.
[3] Cf. *supra*, pp. 43 ff., 46 ff., 48 ff., 50 ff., 52 ff.
[4] Cf. *supra*, pp. 62 ff., 69, 75 ff.
[5] Cf. *supra*, pp. 82 ff.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Germanic Epic and Government.

Philological research has brought out the fact that, before the Germanic race had left its Aryan home, it had passed beyond its primitive savagery, and had developed the elements of a settled social existence.[1] As to its literature, when the race appeared in history it was already in possession of a body of song which gives evidence of high antiquity; moreover, that the song contained narrative elements is evident from the testimony of Tacitus[2] that in it the people had preserved the memory of their ancient origin and their heroes. The only heroes who have survived to us are Arminius[3] and their Hercules,[4] but the fact that the people united in celebrating these indicates not only that certain individuals had been raised above the common level, but also that a consciousness of national existence had been awakened.

From the description of Tacitus the tendencies of the government are easier to ascertain than those of the narrative literature. From his account of the literature we can only draw the general conclusion that the songs were centering about prominent personages, but from his more detailed discussion of the political conditions further conclusions are admissible. It is apparent that there were, at the time of which Tacitus wrote, two diverging tendencies present in the political life of the people; one of these was directed towards the preservation of the individual's independence, and the other towards its limitation.

[1] Tylor, *Archaeology*. Appendix to Wilson's *Anthropology*, p. 52 (Humboldt Library, no. 71).
[2] *Germania*, iii. [3] *Annales*, ii, 88. [4] *Germania*, ii.

## I. *Early Tendencies of the Germanic Race.*

The right of the individual to independence was recognized in the national assemblies, although at the same time the difference in rank was carefully regarded. Thus we are told that while in the assembly the chief spoke first, and afterwards the great men in their turn, their power was exercised through persuasion; they could not command. If the people were pleased with the advice, they made known their approval; if it was displeasing, it was rejected. Again, in these assemblies princes were chosen to act as magistrates in the various towns and villages, but each of these princes was furnished with a number of assistants selected from the body of the people.[1] The respect for individual independence found further illustration in the manner of life. The people dwelt '*discreti ac diversi,*' wherever spring or grove or plain attracted them,[2] even the slave living in his own house apart from his master.[3] But, on the other hand, the man of rank surrounded himself by a body of chosen warriors, who received from him arms, horses, raiment, and food. The warriors vied with him in deeds of valor, recognizing at the same time their obligation to defend him, and to make their own actions subservient to his renown. A spirit of rivalry for the favor of the chief existed among them, and he determined the degrees of their rank according to his judgment.[4] Thus the individual became dependent upon the will of his superior.

These tendencies, which lie at the base of the governments that were gradually developed by the Germanic race, show different degrees of strength in the different tribes, even while they remain at home; but after they have gone abroad, and have organized themselves into separate nationalities, there appears the full development of what in the records of Tacitus had been only outlined. Moreover, the opportunity is then given to trace a clear parallel between the influence

[1] *Ib.*, vii, xi, xii.
[2] *Ib.*, xvi.
[3] *Ib.*, xxv.
[4] *Ib.*, xiii, xiv.

of these tendencies upon the government and upon the narrative literature.

## II. *Incomplete Literary and Political Developments.*

Between the period of distinct national development, to which few of the tribes attained, and the period of which Tacitus writes, there was a growth of song, some characteristics of which may be known from historical records.[1]

1. Jordanes, the historian of the Goths, writing about the middle of the sixth century, tells us that his people sang the deeds of their ancestors to the accompaniment of the lyre;[2] that they remembered their teacher, Diceneus, in their songs;[3] and that from the same source the genealogy of the powerful Amals was given,[4] linking the heroes by direct line of descent with the gods.[5] In these songs there is clearly a continuation of the same forms which Tacitus found in existence among the Germanic people. Jordanes traces the migrations of the Goths from that great northern island, Scandia, under the leadership of their king Berig. He tells of their sojourns, wanderings, and final occupancy

[1] The early dramatic element in the literature may be inferred from the survival of ceremonials similar to those which have among other races been found to be of a dramatic character. The existence of these ceremonials is attested by the edicts of the Church that were directed against them. Thus the council of Autun (573-603) which exercised authority over the Merovingian kingdom, forbade the heathen choral dancing, and the dancing and singing of girls in the churches.—*Concilia Aevi Merovingici* (Ed. Maassen, p. 180).

The Council of Chalons-sur Saône (639-654) sent out practically the same decree (Maassen, p. 272), and again it is found in the *Dicta Abbatis Priminii* (Caspari, *Kirchenhistorische Anecdota*, pp. 176, 188).

We find that in the beginning of the eleventh century the Church had set the seal of its approval upon certain of the 'pagan rites' (Friedberg, *Aus deutschen Bussbüchern*, p. 84), and traces of their continuance may be followed into modern times.

See Koegel, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, i, 1, pp. 24-30.

[2] *De Reb. Get.*, v.

[3] *Ib.*, xi. [4] *Ib.*, xiii, xiv. [5] *Ib.*, iv.

of the land of the Scythians. These things, he says, are related in their ancient poetry almost in the form of history.[1] It is evident that the Goths had in their memories a connected story of their national existence; they had gone beyond the savage childhood of a race where there are only broken remembrances of the past.

Nor does the connected historical narrative mark the point to which they had advanced in their literary progress; they were able, in concentrating attention upon single incidents, to develop the story, to place its elements in causal relation to one another, and to lift the outlines of a plot from the even flow of the song. This is illustrated by the story Jordanes tells of the woman Sanielh, torn to pieces by the horses of Ermanaric, and avenged by her brothers, Sarus and Ammius.[2] It is the same story which appears later in the Northern *Hamdismal*,[3] which enters also into the cycle of the Wolsungs,[4] and of which the final scene is painted on Bragi's shield.[5] There is an indication that it was known to some singer of the *Beowulf*, who compares the necklace given to the hero with the one which Hama bore off when fleeing from Eormanric's cunning craftiness,[6] and it is found in the history of Saxo Grammaticus.[7] From its widespread popularity we may infer that it was known also to Jordanes in the form of a song, but even if it was not, its presence in his history shows that in the sixth cen-

[1] Cf. with the genealogical song of which Tacitus speaks, *Ger.*, ii: Celebrant carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est) Tuistonem Deum terra editum et filium Mannum originem gentis conditoresque.

For comparison of this song with the genealogical songs of different Germanic tribes see Kurth, *Hist. poétique des Merovingiens*, pp. 85-99.

[2] Cf. Koegel, *op. cit.*, i, 1, pp. 146 ff.; i, 2, pp. 212 ff.

[3] Cf. Vigfusson and Powell, *Corpus poeticum boreale*, i, p. 53.

[4] *The Whetting of Gudrun* and *The Lay of Hamdir*.

[5] Vigfusson and Powell, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 2 ff.

[6] 1197-1200; cf. Koegel, *op. cit.*, i, 1, pp. 148 ff.

[7] Bk. 8.

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tury the epic material was clearing itself of confusion in the minds of the Goths.

If, also, an original Gothic story is the basis of Ekkehard's *Waltharius*, as careful investigation[1] shows to be probable, the Goths must have developed this power of selection and sense of causality as early as the fifth century, when Aquitania, to which Walther belonged, was a part of the West-Gothic kingdom in Spain.[2] Further, the identification of the Dietrich[3] of the Middle High German poets with the Dietrich whose exile is mentioned in *Deor's Lament*,[4] in the *Hildebrandslied*,[5] and in the fragment of the old English *Waldere*,[6] traces to Gothic origin a far-reaching cycle.

2. While the other branches of the Germanic race were equally remarkable for their love of song, the records are not always sufficiently clear to determine its character. When, in the sixth century, Gelimer, the last Vandal king in Africa, was conquered, and was suffering from hunger and want, he begged a harp from the chief of the Heruli that he might sing to it the story of his misfortunes.[7] The nature of his subject would indicate that his song was of blended narrative and lyric character; the story of his misfortunes would require the one, his personal feelings render the other

[1] Cf. Koegel, *op. cit.*, i, 2, p. 286.

[2] For references to Walther as the Spaniard see Koegel, *op. cit.*, i, 2, p. 286.

[3] Cf. *Dietrich's Ahnen, Dietrich's Flucht, Der kleine Rosengarten, Alphart's Tod,* etc.

[4] 15-20. The noble Goths were homeless (landless) so that their yearnings took away from them sleep. Dietrich for thirty years held the Maeringaburg; that was well known.

[5] 18, 19. Formerly he eastward went, fled Ottacar's (Eormanric's) malice,
Hence with Theodric and his thanes many.

[6] In the beginning of the second fragment, Gunther is speaking to Walther of the sword which Theodric himself sent to Widia, 'and also a great treasure of jewels with the sword,' because Widia had set him free from captivity.

[7] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* chap. xli.



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probable; but beyond conjecture is the inference that he was accustomed to express himself in song.

3. The Franks had also their body of narrative song, for it was their hero, Siegfried, who, mixed with Burgundian tradition, became the hero of the *Nibelungenlied.* The existence of their songs in the eighth century is attested by Eginhard's[1] statement that Charlemagne himself was familiar with those in which the exploits and the wars of the first princes were celebrated. Further, in the historical accounts of Gregory of Tours and of Fredegar, and in the *Gesta Regum Francorum,* are traces of epic recitals.

There is apparently the outline of such a recital in the story[2] of the wife of Clodion, and of the birth of her son, Meroveus, from whom the Merovingian name was derived. There is a clearer manifestation of the underlying song in a legend[3] of Childeric and Basina; further, incidents in the life of Childeric, in addition to being given with slight variations by the three historians mentioned, are found later in the differentiated French and German epic songs.[4]

[1] *Vita Car.,* 29.

[2] Rajna, *Le origini dell' epopea francese,* p. 51.

Meroveus was the son of the queen and of a sea-god.

[3] Rajna, *op. cit.,* pp. 59 ff.; Koegel, *op. cit.,* i, 1, p. 123; Kurth, *op. cit.,* pp. 179 ff. Childeric, forced because of his dissolute life to flee from his own land, found refuge at the court of Thuringia. Before his flight he had divided a piece of gold with a faithful follower, who had promised to appease the people, and, when the proper time should have come for the king to return to his country, to send him the half of the gold-piece. After eight years he was permitted to come back as king. A little later Basina, queen of Thuringia, came to join him. When asked by him why she had made so long a journey, she answered; 'It is because I know thy valor. If I had believed that there was any one, even across the sea, who could excel thee, it is to him I should have given myself.' Childeric gladly made her his wife, and she bore him a son whom she called Clovis; this son was a great and powerful warrior.—Greg., ii, 12.

[4] Rajna, *op. cit.,* pp. 52 and 68: G. Paris, *Romania,* xiii, p. 603; Kurth, *op. cit.,* pp. 186 ff.

An almost unbroken chain of such material may be traced among the Franks from the time of their entrance into Gaul, having in it various central figures as the subjects of celebration. From the time of Clovis these song-centres become clearer, a tendency towards the absorption of minor characters appears, and the consequent exaltation of one hero to the exclusion of the many. From the time of Clovis, also, the fusion of different elements marks the beginning of a new nation.[1] The literary development will be followed in connection with the growth of the nation.

4. The Germanic bands that passed over into Britain carried with them their narrative songs. There is abundant evidence of this in the *Waldere*, the *Finnsburg* lay, and the *Beowulf*. The fragments of the *Waldere* deal with the story which is the basis of Ekkehard's *Waltharius,* and point back to the songs of the continental life. The *Finnsburg* fragment deals also with the time that precedes the migration to England; it places us in the midst of the struggle between the Danes and the Frisians. The events that were connected with the struggle were perhaps made clear in the lost part of the poem. They were, at least, known to a *Beowulf* poet, who reduces the song to the position of an episode.[2] The *Beowulf*, although in its present form an emanation from the Anglo-Saxon people, has, incorporated in it, many incidents which were the subject of individual songs. The end of the feud between the Danes and the Heathobards, which was temporarily adjusted[3] by the betrothal of Hrothgar's daughter to the son of Frotha, is told by Widsith.[4] In *Saxo Grammaticus*[5] the story is given with further details, and the fiery words of the old warrior who would stir up Ingeld to avenge his father are given in the form of song. The story of the fierce Thrytho, of Offa,[6] known to Widsith[7] as a king of the Angles and the greatest

[1] Cf. G. Paris, *La lit. française au moyen age,* p. 25.
[2] 1068-1159. [3] 2032-2069. [4] 45-49.
[5] Bk. 6. [6] 1931-1962. [7] 35.

of heroes, of Hrethel,[1] crushed by the sorrows of his house, are all incidents through which the *Beowulf* bears testimony to the Anglo-Saxon inheritance of song.

In these separate songs the people had celebrated crises in the lives of different heroes, but in the *Beowulf* they have created a national hero, to whom the others are subordinated, and have developed a central theme, in relation to which the other incidents become episodes. The form of the *Beowulf* corresponds, however, to the early organization of the English nation, and will be considered in that connection.

5. Germanic song had also a rich development among the Lombards, before the people became Romanized. Of their songs, Paul the Deacon has preserved enough to indicate the character. These songs show a keen sense of the dramatic value of certain incidents in the lives of the heroes; they present a situation clearly, without blurring its outlines. This power to select the essential elements of a story finds fair illustration in the Alboin lay that deals with the death of the king. Alboin had overthrown Cunimund, the Gepid king, and had taken away his daughter Rosamund to be his wife. One day, after he had been sitting too long at the banquet, he had wine served to the queen in her father's skull, and invited her to drink merrily with her father. Aroused by the insult, Rosamund resolved to avenge her father's death. In the fatal consequences in which her vengeance involved all the actors, there is the clear working out of a plot, which progresses steadily towards a definite end.

This is but one of many illustrations[2] which may be drawn

[1] 2425-2471.

[2] We are told, for example, the story of Rodolf, King of the Heruli. He had sent his brother to Tato, King of the Lombards, to negotiate concerning a treaty of peace. As the embassador with his followers, having accomplished his mission, is about to leave, he passes before the dwelling of the king's daughter, Rumetrud. She inquires who the noble company may be, and the name of the leader to whom such consideration is shown, and, having ascer-

from the records of Paul the Deacon. Another Alboin[1] lay shows similar characteristics, and bears testimony also to the formation of a cycle of song with this king for a centre.

6. Of the songs which correspond to this period of incomplete political development in the existence of the Germanic people who remained at home, we have only one fragment remaining, but it is distinguished by characteristics similar to those already considered in connection with the product

tained, she sends to invite him to enter her house, and to drink a cup of wine with her. He accepts the invitation, but she seems to have invited him only to mock at his small stature. He answers her scornful speech in kind, and arouses her anger; but she dissembles, and with smiling words places him with his back against a curtain that conceals an open window. At a given signal, her servants, whom she has privately instructed, attack him through the window, and he falls dying from his wounds. When this is reported to Rodolf, king of the Heruli, he breaks the treaty of peace that he may avenge the murder of his brother. In the battle which follows, Rodolf has such confidence in the bravery of his troops that he sits down to a game of draughts while the conflict is in progress. That he may get the earliest possible news of victory, he places a man in a tree near by to report the battle, but with the threat that he shall forfeit his life if he announces the defeat of the Heruli. To the king's repeated questions the man always answers that the Heruli are successful. Not until they are overthrown does he break out with 'Oh, woe to thee, miserable land of the Heruli! the anger of the Lord of Heaven hath fallen upon thee.' Amazed, the king answers, 'My Heruli, they do not flee?' and the man, 'Not I, but thou thyself, oh king, hast said it.' The king fell and his army was destroyed, and so great was the confusion of the fleeing men that they mistook for water a blossoming field of flax, and while stretching out their arms to swim across, they were slain by the swords of their pursuers.—Paul. Diac., i, 20; cf. Koegel, *op. cit,* i, 1, 11, ff.

[1] The Gepids and the Lombards have joined battle, and Alboin, son of Audoin, the Lombard king, has killed Turismod, son of Turisind, the Gepid king. The Gepids, seeing that he is dead for whose sake, in a great measure, they have entered upon the war, lose courage and flee. From conquest and spoiling of the slain, the Lombards come back to their king, and at the banquet which follows they ask him to allow his son Alboin to be his companion at

of other tribes. The *Hildebrandslied* has preserved a dramatic climax in the life of Hildebrand and Hadubrand. It deals with a single adventure, and has lifted it above the encumbrance of unnecessary details.

Although it seems scarcely more than the nucleus for an extended poem, its possibilities of expansion become apparent when it is considered in connection with the modern *Sohrab and Rustum,* which develops almost the same theme. It is the expression of a spirit which is yet limited to a narrow horizon, but, as the view of the people widened, the form of their expression would inevitably change into a fuller narrative. With that widening view, however, opposing influences were brought to bear upon the home-keeping Germans, which repressed the free development of the natural song. The culture which the Church introduced drove the native material far back among the masses of the people, and even there it did not escape foreign influence. The *Hildebrand* was left without further development, and its companion songs disappeared, except in so far as they were absorbed and preserved in the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrun.*

the table. But the king answers that he can not do this thing without breaking the custom of the Lombard folk. which demands that the king's son shall not sit down with his father before he shall have received weapons from the king of some other people. Alboin, having heard his father's words, takes forty young men of the Lombards, and goes to the Gepid king, whose son he has killed, and tells him the reason of his coming. Turisind welcomes him kindly, and seats him at his right hand at the feast, in his dead son's seat. But while the servants are serving at the tables, the king is overcome by his grief, and exclaims: 'Very dear to me is the place, but grievous it is to see him that is sitting therein.' Then the smothered rage of his warriors leaps up, and insult and open scoff involve the two sides in tumult, but the king thrusts himself between, saying that for a man to slay his guest is a deed unpleasing to God. And he gives to Alboin the weapons of Turismod, and sends him back unharmed into his father's kingdom.—Paul. Diac., i, 23, 24.

7. The ancient songs to which Saxo Grammaticus avowedly resorts when he would write the history of the Danish kings and heroes, and the paraphrases in prose and verse which his work contains, not only furnish additional testimony to the Germanic power of seizing upon eminent figures and strong situations, but also indicate the favorite figures around which Germanic song was centering. The Eddic poems serve a similar purpose; for, even if produced[1] in the British Isles, and enriched by Christian and classic conceptions, they have behind them the orally transmitted songs, in which alone the old traditions found the means of preservation.

It has already been noted that Saxo directs attention to the story of the Gothic Sanielh,[2] the popularity of which was indicated by frequent repetition; and that he gives in detail the words of the old warrior[3] who, in *Beowulf,* would arouse Ingeld to avenge his father. In the history of Saxo this warrior was the foster-father of Ingjald; he was the giant Starkath, whose head, after having been cut off, bit the grass. He appears as Starkad in the first of the Helgi lays of the *Edda,*[4] and there his body fought on when his head was off.

Moreover, we have different versions of the same story,[5] in the *Edda,* where Helgi is the son of Sigmund, and in Saxo's work, where he is the son of Halfdan. In both he is a Danish king who kills Hothbrodd in defense of his kingdom.

[1] The theory of Sophus Bugge; cf. his *Home of the Eddic Poems,* pp. xviii, ff.

[2] Cf. *supra,* p. 90.

[3] Cf. *supra,* p. 93.

[4] Vigfusson and Powell, *op. cit.,* i, pp. 139 ff.

[5] The *Edda* introduces characters not known in Saxo's account, indicating that it is based upon a later version than that known by Saxo, although in its present form an earlier composition than Saxo's history; a testimony to the fact that back of each lie different songs which must go yet farther back to seek a common source. Cf. Bugge, *op. cit.,* pp. 144 ff.

A sufficient number of examples has been given to indicate that a network of song connected the Germanic tribes, and fastened itself about certain prominent heroes who were the possession of the race.

From such beginnings it is to be expected that well-rounded and proportioned epic products would result if allowed an opportunity to develop; but there are few of the tribes to which such an opportunity came—certainly not to the Goths, Vandals, and Lombards, who were early lost in the shifting of the nations. On the other hand, the Franks became a strong element in the new nation which arose from the united populations in Gaul, and their songs became a part of the songs of the nation. While these cannot be considered an uncontaminated Germanic development, they are, nevertheless, largely the product of the Germanic spirit, and offer opportunity for a study of the unfolding of Germanic tendencies—an opportunity which is also given through the songs that arose among the Germans at home, and through those which resulted from the migration of the tribes to Britain and to the Scandinavian lands.

So far as the political development of the race has been followed, it has shown certain general characteristics. We have seen that at the time of which Tacitus wrote the people vigorously cultivated personal independence, but also distinctly recognized inequalities in rank. They were living under an aristocratic form of society, and they preserved this form in whatever country they established themselves. But the two tendencies which had been outlined in the early Germanic life did not maintain their relative positions under the altered circumstances. It was impossible that they should. The tribes found themselves called upon to construct new governments in their acquired territories, and they did this by adapting their principles to those of the conquered race, or by absolute substitution for what they found in the conquered land; but even in the latter case their principles had to be adjusted to a wider field of action.

Consequently, as the separate portions of the race gathered into national units, these tendencies, under the modified conditions, developed in varying proportions.

As has been said, only a general correspondence can be noticed so far between the form of the narrative songs and the form of the political constitution. There is the same inclination to exalt certain individuals in each, and among some of the tribes which had advanced far towards a centralized government, as the Goths and Lombards, there were indications of song-cycles in which the poems also look towards a centralizing figure. The tribes that grew into more stable nations did so through a fusion of sympathies and aspirations. The national spirit, which was the result of this fusion, found expression, politically and artistically, in forms that embodied its ideal. In the expression of this ideal is manifested the predominance of one or the other of the early opposing influences.

## III. *Distinct National Developments.*

### English.

The colonization of England by the successive migrations of different tribes brought together a people which possessed a practical basis for unity in language, law, and religion, and which had been moved by a common desire for conquest and expansion. The expeditions had been conducted by different chiefs, and the result was the formation of several states where the old ideas were continued, but necessarily modified through accommodating themselves to new conditions. The stronger of these states gradually absorbed the weaker, and the leaders of the latter became princes under the king who stood at the head of the districts. These conditions, which preceded and led towards the gradual establishing of the seven kingdoms, show a great advance towards national unity, but, as yet, no organized confederation.

It is to this political situation, where within separate boundaries dwelt people of like language, habits, and ideas,

that the poem *Beowulf* corresponds in its development. It is not a perfectly unified piece of work; nor, if it were, would it be in harmony with the ideal of the people as manifested in the form of their contemporary political organization; but the form, both of the poem and the government, shows a tendency towards unity.

A comparison of the *Beowulf* with the *Hildebrand* reveals a difference which corresponds to the difference in the conditions of which they are the product. The irreducible form of narrative which finds exemplification in the *Hildebrand*, is exchanged in the *Beowulf* for a freedom of expression which involves a variety of allusions and comparisons. The change is in harmony with the enlarged horizon of the people. Their eyes have been opened not only to multiplied details in life, but also to the relations which exist between different events and between widely-separated individuals. The strength of Beowulf in overcoming Grendel is like that of Sigmund in slaying the dragon,[1] and is to be contrasted with the weakness of Heremod,[2] who became a burden to his people. While such incidents are introduced into the body of the poem, they are so subordinated to the principal action that they can not be said to make against its unity.

The poem is, however, unmistakably lacking in unity. The principal action itself is not concentrated upon a single definite end. It leads up to one crisis in the cleansing of the mead-hall, and to another in the final struggle of Beowulf with the dragon. It is as though the adventures of Odysseus with the Cyclops had been made the theme of a song, and, after the escape of the hero had been recorded, there had been added a separate crisis in the slaying of the wooers. It is possible to believe that successive singers would have so modified and re-arranged the *Beowulf* that it would have attained to a well-proportioned epic form. If the final struggle with the dragon were the climax of the poem, the method employed by Odysseus of relating his

[1] *Beowulf*, 871-900. [2] *Ib.*, 900-906.

earlier adventures might be employed to subordinate the earlier crisis in the life of Beowulf. But the *Beowulf* was not left to an uninterrupted development in the hands of the singers. As the learning of Christianity penetrated among the people, it brought to their attention other heroes than those of their oral traditions; and it not only furnished the people foreign subjects for their songs, it taught them also the method of writing them down. The result, so far as the *Beowulf* is concerned, is the preservation for us of an imperfectly developed poem, which corresponds, in the unity it has attained, to the unity of the contemporary political life.

As the influence of the Church became more pronounced, in so far as it affected the form of government, it impressed upon the people, through the example of ecclesiastical councils, the benefit of united political action, and thus strengthened the tendency towards unity. But the corresponding literary expression is to be found in a *Judith* or a *Christ*, while the *Beowulf* is left behind as the monument of a national spirit which had not yet worked out a finished ideal.

### Icelandic.

Though the migrations of the tribes to Britain separated them from their old associations, there had been no violent uprooting of their ideals. While their energetic spirits had sought wider fields for activity, the conditions had not been such as materially to disturb the development of the two Germanic tendencies. As the people adapted themselves to the largeness and dignity of their new surroundings, their ideals, while subjected to modification, developed simply and naturally. The Icelandic people also separated itself from the old associations, and transplanted its ideals into new soil; but the circumstances surrounding the separation were different from those under which the migrations to Britain took place.

The Scandinavian people had inherited, in common with their Germanic kindred, the twofold tendency of the old

Germanic life. They recognized distinctly the degrees of rank;[1] their ideal of personal liberty did not include personal equality, but it could not adapt itself to a supreme authority. When, therefore, they saw the power of the king growing, under Harold Fairhair, at the expense of what they considered the rights of the individual, a portion of the people refused to submit to the conditions, and sought in Iceland a refuge where they might enjoy their independence undisturbed. As the retreat to Iceland was in itself a protest against the centralizing power of a king, they naturally cultivated and strengthened an inclination towards popular government. They fostered and developed one of their inherited tendencies, and suppressed the other.

The preferred tendency was allowed among them to work itself out to its logical result; not that Iceland was cut off from the rest of Europe, but its isolation kept its people apart from the great social and political revolutions which involved other nations. The influence of the tendency was shown in the localizing of the Icelander's interests. The strongest bond of union between him and his fellows was their common protest against union—their common determination that as individual chiefs they would be free. Naturally, the clashing of interests and of wills furnished them continual occupation; they were busy with private feuds, friendships, and revenges; but it must be remembered that they were denied even the unifying diversions enjoyed by the Englishmen in the successive invasions of their sister

[1] Their conception of social distinctions is embodied in the *Lay of Righ,* in which the old Anse, Heimdal, walks three times over the earth. From his first visit come the thralls, from his second, the churls, and from his third the earls. To the earls belong the fine linen, the silken clothing, the wheaten loaves, the game and wine, the arts of war and government, and the knowledge of healing. To the churls belong the goatskin coats and barley loaves, the veal and ale, the plowing, building, and carting. To the thralls belong coarse and tattered garments, bran bread loaves and buttermilk, faggot-bearing, fence-building, swine-tending, and goat-herding.—Vigfusson and Powell, *op. cit.,* i, p. 234.

nations, and they had not the task, as had the Franks, of making out of diversified elements a homogeneous people. They had only to maintain their ideal of individual independence.

Under such conditions the horizon of the Icelander was necessarily contracted, and his ambitions limited. He had separated himself from the progress of the time, which lay through the very political processes in which he had refused to participate, and had deliberately fixed his attention upon the details of his personal existence.

Since his interests were of such a nature, when he met with his fellows at Yule-feast or moot he found entertainment in the narration of incidents that illustrated his peculiar life. His recitals dealt with his present concerns, rather than with his old associations or with the doings in Asgard; they depicted actual events rather than imaginative inventions, and the actual had in it distinctly the elements of prose.

The saga grew out of these conditions, as the fitting expression of the Icelandic spirit. It celebrated the strength of the individual character; it made prominent individual friendship or enmity; it was characterized by the straightforward simplicity which marked the individual life, and expressed with the exactness of the photographic artist the details of that life.

The Icelander at the time of the migration was misled by no vague conception of what he desired. When he decided to withdraw himself from the world, he did so with absolute confidence in the justice of his principles, and in his own ability to maintain them. His vision was clear and his convictions decided, and there was no indefiniteness about the results he attained, either in his government or in his literature. His habit of looking at things as to him they really existed is illustrated in his treatment of the supernatural. He recognized that the visitation of spirits was within the limits of any man's possible experience, and since this was the case they were to be met by practical expedients.

Thus we find in the *Eyrbyggja Saga*[1] that when the household of Thorodd is disturbed by a monster, with the head of a seal-fish,[2] which rises through the floor, it is summarily disposed of by being driven down by a forge hammer, as a stake is driven into the earth. When spirits continue to persecute the household, by the advice of the priest Snorri judicial measures are instituted against them; they are accused individually of molesting the mansion and of injuring the inmates; sentence of ejectment is pronounced upon them, and, although unwilling to depart, they submit.[2]

The conditions existing in Thorodd's house had some points in common with those in Hrothgar's hall when it was subjected to the devastations of Grendel, but it is difficult to imagine Beowulf substituting a legal process for the fierce struggle in which Grendel was overcome.

In considering the saga it is impossible to select one as representative of all, although all have, as has been noted, certain qualities in common. Moreover, the written forms with which we deal may have been made to present more of order and progress in their arrangement than was to be found in the original oral traditions. But the original narratives must have presented different degrees of order and progress, for the saga rests upon historical fact, and some lives develop in themselves more elements that make for unity than do other lives. We may consider, then, such a saga as the *Viga-Glum,* for example, representative of a certain class of the oral traditions. It may be said of it as was said of the *Heracleid*[3]—the poet imagines that because Glum was one man, the story of Glum must also be a unity. The progress of the plot is towards the death of the hero, but not towards any crisis. For twenty years he is the best man in Eyjafirth; for twenty more there is no better man. He meets misfortunes, but they are not overwhelming; he appears in strong situations, as, when stone-blind, he rides

[1] For additional illustration of the treatment of the supernatural, cf. the fight with Glam and with the troll-wife, *Grettir Saga,* pp. 105 ff., and 194 ff.

[2] pp. 535 ff. [3] Aristotle, *op. cit.,* viii.

out with a drawn sword under his cloak, hoping to slay at least one of his enemies before he dies; but no one of these situations is the crisis of his life, and he dies quietly, not so great a man as he has been, yet a man of prominence still.

There are other sagas of a more extended biographical character, where the life of the hero appears as the connecting link between the records of his ancestors and those of his descendants. They find illustration in the story of Egil Skallagrimsson, which begins with the quarrel of Egil's grandfather with King Harold, and follows the course of events through the grandfather's and the father's lives; then gives an account of Egil's adventures outside of Iceland; then of his return and of his uneventful years at home until his death; and ends with a brief account of his descendants. The last part is without adventure, and the narrative is distinctly lacking in progress towards a climax.

But the unity of the saga does not always depend entirely upon its biographical character. In addition to the fact that it tells the whole life of a man, it deals sometimes with the chief actor in a tragedy, and there is a subordination of other events to a dominating interest. The *Grettir Saga*, for example, produces a sense of definite movement towards a particular result. It introduces many episodes which are unessential to the development of the theme, but through them all we do not lose sight of the fact that the doomed hero is moving towards his death.

The *Eyrbyggja Saga* may be taken as a representative of another species of narrative. It can not be said to have any hero, although the pontifical life of the priest Snorri holds the incidents together; but they remain as individual and disconnected stories, complete in themselves, and, when thrown together, constitute a narrative without any apparent motive.

The story,[1] for example, that deals with the rival sorceresses, Katla and Geirrida, culminates in the contest between the two, where Katla's metamorphosis of her son is discov-

[1] pp. 521-524.

ered by Geirrida, and both he and his mother are seized and put to death. In like manner, the story[1] of the two Berserker men, who proved so much more troublesome than useful as retainers when brought by Verimond to Iceland, contains a definite plot.

These illustrations, as well as those which might be drawn from the other sagas, indicate that the Icelander was better able to develop incidents than to subordinate them. His idea of combination seems to have been an aggregation of distinct episodes, which sometimes contributed to a definite end, but sometimes did not.

This ability to develop the single incident has been seen[2] to be present in the earlier Germanic recitals, but the results which the Icelander attained are far removed from those embodied in the earlier product. In the *Hildebrand,* for instance, the struggle in the mind of the father between his paternal love and his sense of honor is an elemental one, and the simple incident, if given the proper setting, has in it the power of universal appeal. On the other hand, the celebration of individual interests in the saga, the exactness and elaboration of personal details, the intense realization of the actual, while contributing to the pleasure of those who listened to the recital, lack the power of universal appeal. In the great *Njal Saga,* to which this statement is least applicable, the strength lies especially in the fact that its theme can be partially withdrawn from the local background, and made to express the edict of that all-pervading spirit of law according to which man must suffer for evil done, although he may be its author inadvertently.

Episodes are introduced into one saga from others, but the effect is different from that produced by a similar process in the *Beowulf.*[3] In the saga they are given with a distinct regard for their importance in themselves, rather than with reference to their connection with the scheme as a whole, and consequently they maintain a clear independence of the plot. This overlapping of the sagas does not in

[1] pp. 525 ff. [2] Cf. *supra,* pp. 90, 92 ff., 96. [3] Cf. *supra,* pp. 93 ff., 100.

any way destroy the individuality of the hero, who maintains a lofty position of superiority, but who can no more deny to the characters which chance to touch upon his life the privilege of a fight, a lawsuit, and a funeral, than he could deny it to them in his actual experience. Nor does the connection between the sagas suggest the possibility of evolving from them a great national saga. There is no one of the old heroes but would resent being absorbed and lost in the creation of a composite ideal. There is an aggressive individuality about the stories in which their deeds are recorded that protests as vigorously against absorption as did the Icelanders themselves against the plans of Harold.

The external expression of the Icelandic spirit has a like significance in the literary development of separate sagas and in the loose political organization of the Commonwealth. In neither is there shown a recognition of any close national unity.

### Frankish.

The Franks gave indications early in their history that the tendency towards individual independence was less powerful among them than the other Germanic tendency to subordinate the individual to some central authority. The inclination in this direction was strengthened by contact with the people they conquered. The Celts had been responsive to the influence of the Roman civilization, and the Franks found themselves opposed to a nation which had been built up on Roman principles, and which was, for this reason, prepared to give a favorable reception to the prevailing political sentiment of the invaders.

This sentiment was fostered and rapidly developed. Clovis, the Frankish leader, by his conversion created a common interest between his people and those he had conquered; he united not only the Catholics of the north by appearing as the champion of the Church against whatever enemy opposed it, but he also united the bands which invaded Gaul by contriving the death of their petty kings, and by drawing to himself the allegiance of their followers.

In the fusion of these elements he was laying the foundation for a new nation. It entered upon its existence with the Germanic tendency towards centralization established, and furthermore intensified by the Roman imperialistic influence; under the circumstances, the restraining effect of the other Germanic tendency towards individual liberty was largely overcome. The natural development was towards a monarchy, but this result was forced by Clovis before the people were able to receive it, and the unity which the nation attained under him was chiefly external; nevertheless, he had cultivated the germs of nationality, and they grew even during the internal struggles that followed his death.

Corresponding to this national political development, we should expect to find the growth of a national poetry which would embody the common sentiment, and give expression to the growing national ideal. That progress was made in this direction is shown by the fact that an epic cycle began to be formed about Clovis. The witnesses to this cycle are the traditions which appear later, attached to his name and to that of Charlemagne. For example, the story of his wooing, as given[1] by Gregory of Tours in the sixth century, points to a detailed narrative already in existence among the people. In the account of the same circumstances, which is given[2] by Fredegar, and is supposed to have been written in

[1] Bk. ii, 28. Gondioc, King of the Burgundians, had four sons, Gondebald, Godigisil, Chilperic, and Godomar. Gondebald killed his brother Chilperic with the sword, and had his wife thrown into the water with a stone fastened to her neck; as to her two daughters, they were condemned to exile. The elder, who became a nun, was called Chrona, the younger Clotilda. Now as Clovis often sent embassies into Burgundy, his messengers found the young princess. Seeing that she was beautiful and wise, and knowing that she was of royal blood, they spoke of her to Clovis, who at once sent to demand her hand from Gondebald. That prince, not daring to refuse her to him, gave her to the envoys, who hastened to conduct her to their king. Clovis rejoiced exceedingly at seeing her, and made her his wife.

[2] The emissaries of Clovis had heard of Clotilda, but had not seen her, so Clovis sent as his messenger to her the Roman Aurelian,

the seventh century, there is an elaboration of the story such as would naturally result from popular transmission. In the *Gesta*[1] *Francorum* of the eighth century there are further variations, and the introduction of a religious element not found in the other versions. These different appearances of the same story point to the existence of epic songs in which the people had preserved, yet transformed, the narration[2] of the event.

It is possible that another survival of the Clovis cycle is found in the *Floovent*[3] of the twelfth century, where the hero is spoken of as the son of Clovis; he has been banished by his father because he has cut off the beard of the proud Duke Senechal. The same incident is told in the *Gesta*

who should gain access to her in whatever way he could devise. Aurelian set out as a beggar, in torn garments, having a wallet upon his back, and carrying the ring of Clovis to inspire confidence. Having come to Geneva, where Clotilda and her sister practised hospitality towards strangers, he was received by them. While Clotilda was bathing his feet, he leaned towards her and said in a low voice; 'Lady, I have a great message to give you, if you will deign to grant me a private interview.' The princess consented to do this, and Aurelian, having been admitted into her presence, said to her; 'It is Clovis, king of the Franks, who sent me; he wishes, if it is God's will, to share his throne with you, and, that you may be sure of his intentions, behold the ring which he sends you.'

Clotilda joyfully received the ring and immediately began to plan how she was to be obtained from her uncle Gondebald. When her plan was reported to Clovis he was more than ever charmed by her readiness of resource. He carried it out in all its details, and notwithstanding the interference of Gondebald's wise counselor, Aridius, she was safely conducted to the court of Clovis.

[1] Aurelian, in the habit of a beggar, meets Clotilda as she goes to mass, and attracts her attention. At the interview which she grants him, she receives the message of Clovis with less enthusiasm than in the account of Fredegar; she does not think it fitting that a Christian should espouse a pagan; nevertheless, she permits him to hope, and adds that she commits herself to the will of God.

[2] Cf. Rajna, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 ff.

[3] Rajna, *op. cit.*, pp. 132 ff.

*Dagoberti* of the tenth century, but there the hero is in disgrace with his father, King Clotaire, because he has cut off the beard of the Duke Sadregisle. If the alteration of the Clotaire of the *Gesta Dagoberti* to the Clovis of the *Floovent* is of late origin, it nevertheless indicates that Clovis was still a central figure about which songs collected; and there is also the probability that the author of the *Gesta Dagoberti* transferred to the account of Dagobert an anecdote belonging originally to the son of Clovis.[1]

That other incidents in the life of Clovis were preserved in song is indicated by their reappearing in the life of Charlemagne; notably, the stag which pointed out a safe fording place for his army,[2] and the walls of the besieged city which fell down in answer to his prayer.[2]

In following the material which is shown from the records to have been the subject of song from the time of Clovis to that of Charlemagne, we see an inclination manifested to attach the songs to certain prominent personages. The Saxon poet, writing of Charlemagne in the ninth century, said:

> Est quoque jam notum; vulgaria carmina magnis
> Laudibus ejus avos et proavos celebrant,
> Pippinos, Carolos, Hludovicos, et Theodricos,
> Et Carlomanos Hlothariosque canunt.[3]

There were songs in which the memories of the Saxon wars of Clotaire were preserved. We are told in the *Vie de Saint Faron*,[4] written in the ninth century, the story of the embassy sent by the Saxons to Clotaire, of their insolent demand, their condemnation, imprisonment, baptism, and preservation by Faron; and then of the king's successful expedition against the Saxons, of whom he left not one alive who was as high as his sword.

[1] Cf. G. Paris, *La littérature française au moyen age*, p. 27.
[2] Gregory, i. [3] Bk. v., 115-120.
[4] Cf. Rajna, *op. cit.*, pp. 117 ff.

Saint Faron had lived in the seventh century, and we are told[1] that this incident had been preserved in popular songs.

Dagobert, also, the son of Clotaire, was a favorite figure in song. Certain incidents of his reign, as given in the *Gesta Dagoberti*, are very like those which found place later in the story of the reign of Charlemagne; the similarity in the account of their wars, the correspondence between the destruction of Roland and the twelve peers at Roncevaux, and the death of Haribert and the ten other Dukes in a pass of the Pyrenees, have frequently been pointed out; further, the visitations that accompanied their death may recall the name either of Dagobert or of Charlemagne.[2]

There is proof of the existence of a cycle of Charles Martel to be found in the legends that surround Charlemagne. The recitals that deal with the birth of the latter have been shown to present circumstances analogous to those attending the birth of Charles Martel, but are apparently without foundation in the history of Charlemagne.[3] The accounts[4] of the struggles through which, in all the traditions, Charlemagne succeeded to the throne of his father, do not properly pertain to him, but to Charles Martel. In the legends, also, that deal with the wars against the Saracens and the Saxons, it is impossible to separate the deeds of the one from the deeds of the other. Further, the appearance of Charles Martel in *Girart de Roussillon* and in *Huon d'Auvergne* indicates the existence of a cycle in his name.

The earlier heroes of the popular songs were, however, eclipsed by the later. With the coming of Charlemagne the people found embodied for them their ideal, which had been growing and defining itself throughout the reigns of his predecessors. He satisfied their pride as a nation by the

[1] Cf. G. Paris, *Hist. poétique de Char.*, p. 47.

[2] G. Paris, *ib.*, 444; cf. also G. Paris, *La lit. franç. au moyen age*, p. 28.

[3] G. Paris, *Hist. poétique de Char.*, pp. 439 ff.

[4] Rajna, *op. cit.*, pp. 199 ff.

extent of his empire and the splendor of his glory. Although they were not able to grasp in its completeness the greatness of his plan to unite Christian Europe in one political and spiritual organization, the vision he had brought before them of the great kingdom remained inseparably connected with the existence of a centralizing royal power; it remained, even though the weaker hands of his successors were not able to uphold his ideal. The people contrasted their enfeebled and divided country with the conditions under which they had attained such national greatness, and continued in their reliance upon the royal power as the centre of the national system.

With the time of Charlemagne we come to the dividing place of the nations. It was not only that his successors lacked the personality which could dominate the separate peoples, but natural affinities within the wide domain were asserting themselves more strongly. The weakening quarrels of the imperial family afforded opportunity for the development of these affinities, and in due time the result was that confederations of people detached themselves from one another, and France and Germany came into existence as separate national units.

### German.

Charlemagne had forced the various tribes over which he ruled to accept a common religion, but at the same time he had had regard for the old Germanic customs, and had preserved and honored them. He had left to the local authorities great liberty of action, but had maintained a close relation between them and the central power which lay in his hands. The tribes, however, of which Germany was composed when the empire fell apart, had not been subjected to the same processes which had assisted in shaping the nationality of France. They had been brought into the empire without going through the preliminary stages of preparation for it which the Franks had experienced through contact with the Roman-Celtic civilization. The policy of

Charlemagne had not suppressed their individual independence, although leading it to subordinate itself to a higher authority.

After his death the ancient families that had stood at the head of the tribes again came forward into prominence, and in the confusion which subsequently followed the extinction of the Carlovingian dynasty, it almost seemed that the great dukes would not again acknowledge allegiance to any king. But the ideal which Charlemagne had held before them was strong enough to prevail, and the warring elements were united under Henry, Duke of the Saxons, and under the dynasty which he founded the existence of Germany as a nation was assured, and a consciousness of national life was aroused which could never be wholly lost.

In this dynasty the royal authority, in the person of Otto the Great, reached its highest point; it gathered into its hands both the political and the ecclesiastical forces, but it was unable to hold these forces in agreement, and when acting through weaker men than Otto it parted with its prerogatives to both nobles and clergy. As the people assumed greater independence, and the tribes began to choose their own dukes, the royal authority relied upon the spiritual to offset the influence of the nobility. The tendency of the spiritual authority was towards ecclesiastical centralization, and its influence in shaping the political ideals of the people must have been towards political centralization; but the influence was interrupted, and the tendency modified; for although the end of the Saxon dynasty had found the Empire and the Church united, the Frankish dynasty which followed found them in conflict; the clergy had decided to free themselves from secular authority. In the ensuing struggle the emperor deposed the pope, and the pope excommunicated the emperor; the nobles, freed by this excommunication from their vows of allegiance to the sovereign power, were united for a time with the clergy. The result of the struggle was the diminution of the royal authority, and the strengthening of the ecclesiastical. While this result was

not opposed to the ideal that found expression in central authority, it brought about the independence of the nobles, which was opposed to the centralization of power. Under these conditions Frederick Barbarossa came to the throne. The Church had proudly asserted its superiority as the sun from which the imperial moon received its light, and the masses had been brought to see in the pope the embodiment of their spiritual ideal, although the emperor remained the centre of their political system. Both the temporal and the ecclesiastical governments relied upon the voluntary support of the dukes; but the dukes were still vassals, at whose head was the emperor, and while the absolutism of Otto was no longer possible, there was a chance for a strong personality to hold together the individual elements, and to strengthen the national feeling.

This was accomplished by Frederick Barbarossa. He was not able to carry out in detail his magnificent plans, but his influence was towards political unity, and he has continued to represent among the people their ideal of German greatness, as is indicated by the old legend according to which he is only sleeping at Kyffhäuser, and will again come forth, when needed, to renew the glory of his ancient empire.

It was under the impetus of the strong national feeling during the Hohenstaufen dynasty that the old songs which celebrated the ancient heroes of the people were again received with favor. They had retreated before the hostility of the Church into the obscure places of society. The conciliatory attitude which, in the Old Saxon *Heliand*, made Christ a German ruler and the apostles twelve war-thanes, was not of long duration. It had soon been replaced by the more uncompromising clerical position of Otfrid in the *Evangelienbuch,* where he would not by so much as alliterative rime awaken a heathen memory. But the songs were not lost, although driven back before the inroads of clerical literature.

They did not escape changes incident to their surroundings at the time of their revival into general favor; but these changes were of a superficial character, and the poems con-

tinue to breathe the spirit of their popular origin. They tell of brilliant feasts, of ceremonious visits, of tournaments and of going to mass, but underneath these externals the survival of the old Germanic ideals is apparent. It is a testimony to the natural development of the songs that they preserve their fundamental simplicity of thought and outline in the same period which shows such artificial products as King Rother's giants and Duke Ernst's flat-footed men, who used their feet for umbrellas and their ears for clothing. The external character of the changes introduced finds illustration in the Hagen of the *Nibelungenlied*, who makes his concession to Christianized society when he sends the visiting Burgundians to confession and prayer, while a few hours later he kills the child Ortlieb and casts his head in his mother's lap, and then rages through the hall—no Christian, but a heathen war-god in his love of slaughter.

In the very fact that the *Nibelungenlied* has been kept comparatively free from outside influence, and has been left to its natural development among the people, lies the reason that it may justly be considered a genuine expression of the Germanic spirit of the thirteenth century; and the tendencies and ideals which are discernible in this manifestation of the national spirit should correspond with those which found embodiment in the form of the contemporary political constitution.

We have seen that the form attained by the government under the Hohenstaufen dynasty was the result of tendencies and influences which had been apparent far back in the national existence. The *Nibelungenlied* was the expression, in another form, of the same tendencies and influences. It is also distinctly a national development; it draws its material from various portions of Germany and from various periods of her history, as is apparent when the different elements are traced to their original homes.

It would seem that as early as the fifth century the great outlines of the legend were in existence. They may be presented somewhat as follows: First, the Franks were at that

time celebrating the glorious Siegfried as a national hero.[1] Secondly, the early historians place the overthrow of the Burgundian kingdom about 435, and shortly afterwards King Gundicar and his men were massacred by the Huns. A remnant, however, took refuge in Savoy, and, in the code of laws drawn up by their King Gondebald, in the sixth century, the names of his predecessors are given as Gibica, Gislahar, Godomar, and Gundahar.[2] Thirdly, in 450, Attila, with an immense army of Huns, invaded Gaul, and the great leader was found one morning dead in his tent, while his newly-married wife wept beside him.[3] In these seemingly disconnected incidents is the basis for much of the Nibelungen legend. In the *Nibelungenlied* it is the three sons of the Burgundian king Gibich who are betrayed and destroyed, with their followers, at the court of the Huns, and the names of the kings are Giselher, Gernot, and Gunther. In the Scandinavian version of the legend the circumstances surrounding the death of Atli are similar to those historically attributed to Attila.

It is evident that the events referred to above had created a profound impression, and that, having been combined and modified in themselves, they were united with the Siegfried legend,[4] and started in a more or less connected form on

[1] The legends tell how he roused from slumber a maiden surrounded by a wall of flame which only the bravest man could cross; again, how he was trained during his youth by a wise smith in a forest, how he killed a dragon and won a magic treasure; how he afterwards fell into the power of the Nibelungen, the former possessors of the treasure, was detained among them by enchantment, and was forced to conquer for one of them a warlike virgin, after which he was assassinated.—Cf. Lichtenberger, *Le poème des Nibelungen*, pp. 80 ff., 393 ff.

[2] Cf. Lichtenberger, p. 74.

[3] Attila, the poet sang, had espoused a Burgundian princess, Ildico or Hilda, had treacherously killed her brothers Gislahar, Godomar and Gundahar, the three sons of Gibica; but Hilda avenged the death of her brothers by killing her husband.

[4] The Burgundians became, in the songs, the Nibelungen possessors of Siegfried's treasure and the murderers of Siegfried, and then perished in their turn at the hands of Attila.

their epical journey. As the poem resulting from the combination passed from district to district, and from singer to singer, it underwent[1] profound changes, and was enriched by the introduction of new persons and new motives. Irminfrid of Thuringia, and his companion Irinc, Rüdiger of the Austrian marches, and Dietrich, king of the Ostrogoths, Volker and Hagen, Eckewart, Ortwein, and various others, localized in the songs of different regions, contribute to the national character of the legend.

A long time before the *Nibelungenlied* was written down, its principal scenes must have been presented in continuous form. This fact is attested by the appearance of the legend in different sections of the country in versions which vary in certain details, but are alike in general character. Almost contemporary with the *Nibelungenlied* the old *Sigfridslied* appeared in southern Germany. It tells of the childhood of the horned Sigfrid (*Hürnen Seyfrid*), of his leaving his father's court, of his apprenticeship to a blacksmith, and of his going into the forest where he kills dragons, and makes himself invulnerable by bathing in their melted horns. Then he sets free the daughter of King Gybich, and by killing the dragon which had carried her off gets possession of the Nybling treasure. Then the song tells the story of his marriage, and of his death at the hands of Hagen. Moreover, in northern Germany Saxo Grammaticus[2] tells us that the 'well-known treason of Kriemhild against her brothers' was sung at the beginning of the twelfth century. Again in the thirteenth century the compiler of *Thidrekssaga,*[3] according to his own testimony, found his material in the songs chanted by the people. In his version of the legend, Siegfried, who is here Sigurd, is brought up in a forest by a smith, Mimi; he possesses marvelous strength, and begins his adventures by killing a dragon. The legend

[1] In the transformed legend, Kriemhild plays the part of Attila in claiming the Nibelungen treasure and in killing her brothers, while her husband, Etzel, becomes a peace-loving king.

[2] Ed. Holder, p. 427. [3] *Ths.*, 392.

differs at first from that in the *Nibelungenlied;* it gives the details of Sigurd's relations with Brynhild before his marriage with Grimhild, the sister of Gunnar, but the final issue of events is the same in both. Again, the Eddic legends and the *Volsunga Saga,* even if the work of artists[1] and brought in written form from British soil, in preserving practically the same story bear testimony to the connected form in which it existed.

As found in the *Nibelungenlied,* the story of Siegfried forms the first division of the poem. In this division he is a brilliant hero, but does not draw around him and subordinate to his personality the other characters in the poem, as does the hero of the English *Beowulf;* Kriemhild, Brunhild, Hagen, and the Burgundian kings all play parts which are fundamentally necessary to the progress of the story. The first division ends with the death of Siegfried, and thus the most prominent character is removed.

In the second division Rüdiger, Volker, Dietrich, and Dankwart come forward into prominence, and Kreimhild and Hagen struggle for mastery.

The two portions of the poem are united by the life of Kriemhild;—in the first part the beautiful, gentle wife of Siegfried, in the second the fierce avenger of his death, but in neither the undisputed heroine of the poem. She is, nevertheless, the central figure, or rather the loose bond which gives to the poem the unity it possesses.

And the poem does possess a certain unity. It is not that of the *Beowulf,* but it is, on the other hand, far removed from the distinctly individualized character of the Icelandic saga. The development corresponds rather to that of a drama in two acts, each of which contains its own crisis. In these separate acts the leading characters move with freedom and attain to the utmost prominence, but in the scheme of the whole their energies all contribute to the final catastrophe.

[1] Cf. Bugge, *op. cit.,* pp. 373 ff.; cf. *supra,* p. 97.

The unity of the *Gudrun* is of a similar nature. The heroine holds together the various elements, but the different scenes have their individual heroes.

The literary form in which the German spirit expressed itself corresponds to the form of its political expression. The ideal which demanded an organized government, but could not tolerate an absorbing imperial centre, was responsible also for the form of the literary product. The great dukes, who acknowledged allegiance to the king, fought to maintain their independent sovereignty, but just as Frederick Barbarossa held together their recognized individual powers and directed the leaders through their common national interests, so in the same manner Kriemhild in the *Nibelungenlied* holds together and furnishes the motive for the action of the poem.

### French.

In France the conditions surrounding the political and literary developments differed from those existing in Germany. The French nation was made up of that portion of Charlemagne's kingdom in which the monarchic principles had been most firmly established. Stubbs says[1] of the French that they recognized the royal power as 'their safeguard against disruption,' their 'witness of national identity.' But the royal power was not undisputed; the feudatories contended for a certain degree of individual independence. In Germany the contention had been sufficiently vigorous and definite to modify the monarchic idea, and the result, politically, had been the building up of an organization with the king at its head, but with a practical independence for the members. On the other hand, the French barons were contending for a notion which was not clearly defined. They were moved by a desire to curtail the power of royalty, but never to overthrow it; they did not conceive of establishing for themselves independent political organizations. We find that for a time they succeeded in absorbing

[1] *Constitutional Hist.*, p. 3.

the vitality of the royal power, but they carefully preserved its nominal suzerainty. They reached no definite political results, upon the strength and stability of which they might oppose the monarchic tendency.

In the course of time the feudatories lost their vaguely directed energy, and 'the central force gradually gathered into itself all the members of the nationality in detail, thus concentrating all the powers which in earlier struggles they had won from it, and incorporating in itself those very forces which the feudatories had imposed as limitations on the sovereign power. So its character of nominal suzerainty was exchanged for that of absolute sovereignty.'[1]

The literary development of the French nation runs parallel with the political. The Charlemagne cycle is the expression in literature of the tendency that made for unity in the political life, and as such represents for us the monarchic ideal of the people.

This cycle so effaced and absorbed the poems that celebrated other kings that the jongleurs eventually knew only three royal personages—Charlemagne, his father, and his son.[2] The singers changed and developed the central hero through successive generations. He had been incontestably great in reality, and the lustre of other men was added to him until he represented the ideal of the people's aspirations as he could not have done had he retained his purely historic character. Through his absorption of the glory of the other kings he appeared as the composite type of the Christian king, the champion of the Christian faith. Moreover, the enemies who had opposed the various kings, and whom, in the contemporary songs, it had not been necessary to designate, were ranged by the jongleurs on the other side as Saracens.

In this assimilation of individuals and of events the songs were stripped of their local character. Charlemagne was exalted beyond human proportions, but his personality was

[1] Stubbs, *ib.*, p. 3.

[2] Cf. G. Paris, *La lit. franç. au moyen age*, p. 35.

necessarily restricted to elemental characteristics, and, in the narration of the events, details fell away that were not of universal significance. As has been said, in the exaltation of Charlemagne his qualities had been developed beyond the possibility of human attainment; he occupied a position intermediate between the people and their God. Their ideal human hero was the man who was most faithful to this royal personage and to the aims for which this personage stood.

In the oldest song which remains of the Charlemagne cycle, this typical hero is Roland. He is brave to rashness, devoted to his friend, to his king, to his country, and to his faith. He is chief of the warriors who surround the throne, and whose perfect unity is based upon their common loyalty. He is so great that other personages are dwarfed in his presence. He is the living, dominating centre of the poem. As a hero, he has lost his local attachments, and belongs to the nation; consequently it is his general qualities, those which appeal to the people in common, that are emphasized. One sees constantly, back of whatever he does, his loyalty to king, country, or religion.

The poem which celebrates his glory produces an impression of remarkable simplicity; but this seems to be the result rather of concentration upon a definite end than of any curtailing of incident. It is an illustration of the effect of the subordination, and not the elimination, of individuals and events. The subordination, which is evident in the form of the poem, is the natural expression of the subordination of motif to the one dominant motif which concentrates in itself all the power of the poem. The outer symmetry is an embodiment of the inner oneness of the idea. The poem is a literary development corresponding, in its adoption of an absorbing hero, to the ideal monarchic constitution of the people.

The political tendency that opposed itself to the monarchic development had also its parallel literary expression. It finds illustration in the poems that glorify the struggles of

the great barons against royalty and against each other. In these poems the vague efforts towards a limited independence are celebrated, with the result that the long-drawn-out stories of a *Renaud de Montauban,* an *Ogier de Danemark,* or a *Raoul de Cambrai,* appear instead of the centralized narrative of a *Roland.*

The *Renaud de Montauban* has often been referred to as a fitting representative of this kind of narrative. It presents to us a combination of but loosely connected traditions. In the first part we are introduced to the court of the emperor at Paris. He is complaining of the absence of Beuve d'Aigremont, the brother of Aimon, the hero's father. Aimon, in attempting to justify his brother, draws upon himself also the wrath of the emperor, and has to leave the court, but he takes with him so large a following that the emperor is moved to employ pacific measures. By the advice of his peers he sends an embassy to the Duke of Aigremont, but the messenger is insolent, and the duke cuts off his head. Then again the emperor sends a message, this time by his son, Lohier, who goes forth attended by a body of knights. They arrive at Aigremont and are received, but Lohier is insulting, and in the general *melèe* which ensues the greater part of the royal messengers are slaughtered. The small remnant which survives carries sadly back the body of Lohier to his father. Then the war commences between Charlemagne and his rebellious vassal. Aimon is engaged on the side of his brother, Beuve d'Aigremont, but notwithstanding his support, Beuve is finally compelled to sue for peace, and Charlemagne is counseled by his peers to exercise clemency. The war ceases, but the emperor does not forget the death of his son, and when, a little later, Beuve is assassinated, he leaves the crime unpunished. It it at this point, when we are likely to have forgotten the name of the hero, that he enters upon the scene.

Aimon, having been thoroughly reconciled, has brought his four sons to Charlemagne's court. They have been received with favor, and Renaud has been given, among

other things, the famous horse, Bayard. While playing a game of chess with the emperor's nephew, Bertholais, Renaud commits the indiscretion of winning, and is promptly struck in the face by Bertholais. Renaud appeals to the emperor, and when he is refused any redress, further demands justice for the murder of his uncle Beuve, whom he seems to have forgotten less readily than his father has done. The immediate result of this appeal is another blow, this time from the hand of Charlemagne himself. Renaud goes back into the hall, kills Bertholais with the chess-board, and retreats with his brothers from the palace, after having filled it with killed and wounded. The emperor declares war upon the four sons of Aimon, but Aimon himself remains at court, compelled to abandon his sons, and bound by his oath as a vassal to treat them as enemies. The story of the war involves an interminable recital of adventures and combats, which end finally by a peace concluded according to conditions almost the same as had previously been refused to Renaud. The hero sets out for the Holy Land, whence he returns to Cologne to die as a simple workman on the cathedral.

It is a story of the struggles of an individual for rights which are never quite clearly determined. Like other heroes of the French feudal epic, Renaud is involved in alternate wars and reconciliations with the same power, but his effort is never for an absolute independence. He always recognizes the supremacy of the king, and is profoundly remorseful over his necessary resistance.[1] When, through the magic of Maugis,[2] the sleeping emperor is brought into the power of Renaud and his brothers, they do not slay him as their enemy, but fall on their knees before him.[3] 'Charles is my lord,' says Renaud, and he begs for peace. He will surrender Montauban, he will give up Bayard, he will go to the Holy Sepulchre, he will leave France; and

[1] Cf. G. Paris, *Hist. poétique de Charlemagne,* pp. 460 ff.

[2] Cf. L. Gautier, *Revue des questions historiques,* vii, pp. 109 ff.

[3] An interesting parallel is to be found in *Samuel* I, chap. xxiv.

when the king remains inflexible, the rebel sends him safely away, and continues the struggle against him.

The French feudal hero is always on the defensive; his loyalty to the king has been weakened, while he has been given no positive impulse towards independence. The poem in which his ill-defined conceptions and wavering efforts find expression is marked by confusion of form; the rambling narrative parallels in lack of unity the anarchic political manifestations contemporary with it.

It was not simply that the poet of the feudal epic was submerged in a mass of material. The reason for the difference between his production and the *Roland* lies deeper. The singer of the *Roland* did not lack material; the poem shows that he was familiar with other songs which celebrated incidents more or less intimately connected with his theme; but the idea which dominated his work was inherently unifying, and found appropriate expression in unified form, while a *Renaud de Montauban* is an illustration of opposite conditions producing opposite results.

The feudal epic must, from its very nature, possess a local character; the interests of the individual are magnified, instead of, as in the *Roland,* the interests of the nation. Accordingly it is the *Roland* which remains the national song, representing in the literature the prevailing ideal of the people, as the monarchy represents it in the government.

The result attained both in the literature and in the government is the logical outgrowth of the development of one of the Germanic tendencies. The Franks had looked with favor upon the centralization of authority; their inclination in this direction was strengthened by external influences; the tendency was allowed a practically uninterrupted development in the French nation, and sufficient time in which to mature its product.

The result is in direct contrast with that to be seen in the Icelandic government and saga, where the other Germanic tendency also attained maturity. Putting aside for the moment any consideration of the harmony which exists between

the literary and the political manifestations, and comparing the literary product of the one nation with that of the other, the fundamental difference between them appears to lie in the contracted individuality of the saga as contrasted with the universal significance of the Roland.

In the death scenes of each, where we find the strongest situations, the contrast is clear. When Atli, in the *Grettir Saga*,[1] is standing in his doorway, Thorbiorn, suddenly appearing, pierces him through with a spear. Atli remarks, 'Broad spears are about now,' and falls dead on his threshold. Further, in the final scenes of Grettir's life at Drangey, we have only the spectacle of a brave man meeting his death at the hands of personal assailants.[2] The possibility of any abstract meaning's being drawn from the situation is destroyed by the persistent presentation of things as they happen. Even in the death-scenes of the great *Njal Saga* we see the results of private feud, and the characters are heroic in their own defence, or because they recognize some personal obligation. Njal[3] lay down to die in the burning house, because he was an old man and could not avenge his sons, and Bergthora lay down by his side because, when very young, she had promised that naught should separate her and Njal. Skarphedinn,[4] penned in by the burning timbers, was sought, when the fire had burned away, from the direction whence they had heard his death-song. They found him with his legs burned off to the knees, with his battle-axe sunk in the timbers before him, and his eyes wide open, proud and calm. But it is the same story in all—a story of individual bravery exerted because of individual need. It is never the story of a bravery which has behind it the impelling power of a nation's sentiment, or of a nation's need.

In the *Roland*, on the other hand, the solitary figure of the hero, who sees his companions all dead about him and

[1] p. 133.
[2] *Njal Saga*, ii, pp. 172 ff.
[3] pp. 238 ff.
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 193 ff.

knows that his own death is near, climbing the hill on the Spanish side, that, with sword in hand, he may lie there under the trees with his face towards Spain, and thus say to Charlemagne and to the army of France, 'Il est mort en conquerant,' possesses a universal meaning which touches the spirits of all ages. The last blast of his horn and the last stroke of his sword have a symbolic sense for the people of any land and time.

The independent character of the sagas, and their attention to local interests, are in harmony with the form of the Icelandic government, where the power and independence of the individual were of the first consideration; the universal significance of the *Roland*, and its devotion to wider interests, are in harmony with the centralized form of government, in which the individual was subordinated.

The present study has attempted to do nothing more than to define the outlines of Germanic ideals as exhibited in literature and government, and, by bringing them side by side, to show their correspondence during the national development. Starting with the two opposing tendencies which appeared among the Germanic people at the time of which Tacitus wrote, and following them through the steady progress of the race, we see that they vary in their relative influence.

By the migrations of the tribes various separate political organizations were established, some of which were transitory. Corresponding to these organizations are the separate songs in which, as in the time of Tacitus, the favorite heroes were celebrated; but our information both as to these governments and literatures is too meagre to allow us to trace a clear parallel between them. Among certain of the tribes, however, as the Goths[1] and Lombards,[2] where the political organization had time to reach a degree of distinctness, the songs were beginning to gather into national cycles.

Where nations were firmly established, and opportunity was offered for the maturing of their ideals, the strength

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 91. [2] Cf. *supra*, pp. 94 ff.

of one or the other of the early tendencies appears clearly in its influence upon the narrative literature and upon the political constitution. This is evident from the following instances:

1. In England, while the people were engaged in building up a centralized government with a king at its head, and with elements subordinated but contributing to the energy of the central power, the *Beowulf* was stopped in its parallel growth, imperfectly unified in its construction, but showing the tendency of the national spirit towards unity.[1]

2. In Iceland, where the individual independence developed at the expense of any true national unity, the sagas appeared as distinct individual[2] manifestations.

3. In Germany, which combined the notion of individual freedom with the recognition of a central head, the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrun* were produced, with their equally clear regard for the prominence of individual characters and their unity based upon a central hero.[3]

4. In France, where the natural tendency of the invaders was strengthened by favorable external conditions, the impulse was towards absolute monarchy; the *Roland,* in its subordination of incidents and individuals to a dominant theme and hero, shows a similar tendency towards centralization.[4]

These facts indicate that the same stage in the development of the national spirit which necessitates a certain form of government necessitates also in the literary manifestations of that spirit a corresponding form. Moreover, in the recognition of the successive stages through which the government passes in its development is the recognition of corresponding stages in the development of the literature. In each is the evolution into actual form of what is the inherent potentiality of the national spirit.

[1] Cf. *supra,* pp. 100 ff.
[2] Cf. *supra,* pp. 101 ff.
[3] Cf. *supra,* pp. 112 ff.
[4] Cf. *supra,* pp. 119 ff.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Greek Epic.

### I. *Its Maturity.*

When we turn to a study of the Greek epic, two great narrative poems at once confront us, which, in the light of the records of other peoples, we can regard only as the product of an advanced civilization, as the culmination of a process of literary development. This conclusion is strengthened, first, by the external evidence of other monuments which remain as witnesses to the prehistoric conditions of the Greeks, and, secondly, by the internal evidence of the poems themselves.

First, the external evidence indicates that the advancement of the Greeks in other directions was sufficient to render probable a maturity also in their literary growth. Unmistakable testimony to a period of early civilization in Aegean lands is disclosed by excavations at various places. Under this civilization, known as the Mycenaean, it is apparent that the people, approximately as early as 1600 B. C., had established centres of culture,[1] where they had not only received artistic ideas from Asiatic and Egyptian sources, but had developed an independence in their artistic conceptions.

Among other evidences of this fact is the character of the mural architecture,[2] and of the work of the goldsmiths and ceramic artists. The Mycenaean art seems to have

[1] Cf. Holm, *Hist. of Greece,* i, chap. viii; Curtius, *Hist. of Greece,* i, pp. 153 ff.; Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte,* i, pp. 122 ff.

[2] Perrot and Chipiez, *Hist. de l'art dans l'antiquitié,* vi, chaps. iii-xi.

been indebted in all directions, but 'the indigenous element was able to hold its own, and to recast what it took from others in an original mold.'[1] The type was of a sufficiently distinct nature to make it possible to recognize the diffusion of Mycenaean products among other peoples, and to trace their influence upon the character of the native art with which they came in contact.[2] The date of some of the work is shown by Mr. Petrie, by means of Mycenaean pottery found in Egypt, and Egyptian designs found in Greece, to be contemporary with the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty[3] (about 1500 B. C.), and, earlier than these, there are ruder but distinctly marked varieties which he finds constantly associated with Egyptian pottery older than 2000 B.C.[4] The independent and original character of the Mycenaean culture seems unquestionable.

That the Greeks had a part in this civilization is indicated by various facts: It has been shown that the Mycenaean tradition underlies much of the classical Greek art;[5] that the splendid vessels and household furnishings of the Mycenaean time were like to those of the Homeric time; that the general plan of the palaces at Mycenae and at Tiryns corresponds to that of the Homeric palace; that in armor, weapons, and manner of fighting, the Mycenaean warrior resembled the Homeric warrior.[6] At many points the Mycenaean civilization is in accord with the Homeric. Moreover, it is significant that in Greek legends the supremacy of Mycenae was acknowl-

[1] Evans, *The Eastern Question in Anthropology, Rep. Brit. Assoc. for Adv. of Science,* 1896, p. 919.

[2] For extended discussion see Evans, *ib.,* pp. 920 ff.

[3] Petrie, *Egyptian Bases of Greek History, Jour. Hell. Studies,* ii, pp. 271 ff.

[4] Petrie, *ib.,* p. 276. For discussion of the pre-Mycenaean art see Blinkenberg, *Antiquités premyceniennes,* in *Memoires des antiquaires du nord,* 1896; Edgar, *Prehistoric Graves at Pelos, Annual Brit. School,* iii (1896-7), p. 35.

[5] Evans, *op. cit.,* p. 920.

[6] Busolt, *op. cit.,* chap. i, 5.

edged: Agamemnon, the leader of the combined forces, was from Mycenae, and 'with him followed most and goodliest folk by far; and in their midst himself was clad in flashing bronze, all glorious, and was preëminent amid all warriors, because he was goodliest and led folk far greatest in number.'[1]

The Mycenaean civilization was already old when, in a general shifting of the tribes, approximately in the twelfth century B. C., it was overthrown by the migration of the warlike Dorians into Peloponnesus.[2] As a consequence of this migration, the pre-Dorian occupants of the land were pressed out beyond the sea to the Asiatic coast, where a culture similar to their own seems to have been in existence. It is natural to suppose, however, that the character of their art would be modified during the long period of war, of wandering, and of uniting again into colonies. We find, indeed, that the Homeric art, while showing, as has been said, its connection with the Mycenaean, shows also that it has been adapted to simpler conditions of life.

If the Homeric epics, in some shape, were known in European Greece before the Dorian migration, as is indicated in the poems by persons, places, and events of European origin,[3] we have reason to suppose that they had attained a form in accord with the conditions of advanced culture which surrounded them. They must, even at that time, have given evidence of a maturity in artistic conception which corresponded to the maturity of the people's other artistic products. If they were carried out of European Greece to the Asiatic shores by the national convulsions of the migration period, they were subjected in their new home to the same influence which developed the other artistic conceptions of the people; and, while conditions were of a nature to modify the Mycenaean ideals, the modification was in the direction of a more national character, for the

[1] *Il.*, ii, 569-580.
[2] Busolt, *op. cit.*, pp. 86 ff.
[3] Cf. Jebb, *Homer*, pp. 164-173.

relation which the Mycenaean art had maintained with the Oriental was necessarily interrupted, and the artistic development of the people became more independent.

Secondly: Evidence of maturity is furnished by the internal testimony of the poems themselves. Many of the facts referred to in this connection have so frequently been noted that their appearance here has much the form of a summary.

1. The place of the minstrel was an assured one in Homeric times.[1] He is more in evidence in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*, but the nature of the poems may account, at least in part, for this. He appears, however, in the second book of the *Iliad*, in the person of Thamyris the Thracian,[2] and is evidently familiar with contests in song. It was no new thing for the minstrel to be celebrating the actions of the gods[3] and heroes; in some cases a cycle of poems was at his command. For instance, one song celebrated the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles,[4] another the 'pitiful return' of the Achaeans,[5] and yet another how the Greeks fashioned the wooden horse,[6] and by means of it wasted Troy. Moreover, in the last song the minstrel was giving by request a certain portion of an extended narrative. These facts are indicative of the literary background from which the Homeric epics arose, and do not belong to the primitive stage of culture.

2. The recurrence in the poems of epithets which have evidently become stereotyped through usage is an evidence that the characters had long been known, in the popular celebration, by certain distinguishing qualities; 'fleet-footed Achilles' and 'crafty Odysseus' are so designated under circumstances that do not suggest the qualities expressed in the epithets.

3. The divine world of the Greeks, as pictured in the poems, is the home of many foreign gods.[7] They have been

[1] *Od.*, iii, 267-8; viii, 63 ff. [2] 595. [3] *Od.*, viii, 266 ff.
[4] *Od.*, viii, 74 ff. [5] *Od.*, i, 325 ff. [6] *Od.*, viii, 499 ff.
[7] For example, Aphrodite, 'a Phoenician form of the supreme goddess of nature,' and Poseidon and Hercules, also of foreign origin.—Holm. *op. cit.*, chap, xi.

adapted to the Greek character, and have become a national possession, but this result must have been brought about by a gradual process; they represent, in consequence, an advanced stage of development.

4. It has been shown that the language of the poems is not the spoken dialect of any one time. It contains many forms for even the commonest words,[1] the poet evidently using the form of his own day as well as a traditional poetic diction—an indication that the Homeric epics attained their present shape after a period of long transmission.

5. The maturity of the poems appears also in the tone of reflection which pervades them.[2] They are not simple stories of action; the circumstances awaken thought in the mind of the singer; his spirit is not confined by the limits of the occasion with which it deals; he is alive to resemblances between certain characteristics in things that are entirely distinct; he does not give expression to a vague feeling of resemblance, but to a clear-cut mental process. Thus we read that when the people hastened to the council from the huts and ships, their coming was as that of thronging bees issuing from some hollow rock;[3] before the speech of Agamemnon the assembly 'swayed[4] like high sea-waves of the Icarian main,' or as the ears of corn bow down before a violent wind. As the people went forth to battle,[5] the dazzling gleam of their armor was like the blaze of a forest fire, and the noise of their voices like the cries of feathered tribes; as they awaited battle in the plain their number was as the 'leaves and flowers in their season.' Such clear recognition of the quality common to objects so dissimilar in the main is not the characteristic of new impressions, but rather of those upon which the mind has been accustomed to dwell. Since the simile is itself a development from vaguer forms of comparison,[6] the important part which it plays in the poems is a testimony to their maturity.

[1] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 136, notes 1 and 2.
[2] Cf. *Il.*, ii, 204 ff.; *Od.*, ii, 275 ff.
[3] *Il.*, ii, 87 ff. [4] *Il.*, ii, 144 ff. [5] *Il.*, ii, 455 ff.
[6] Cf. G. Buck, *The Metaphor.*

6. The home-life of the Greeks, as depicted in the poems, gives evidence of a certain degree of refinement. There is no opportunity in the *Iliad* to describe the interior of any palace except that of Priam,[1] but as the poem makes little difference between the civilization of the Greeks and that of the Trojans, the meagre details given may be considered as characteristic of the palaces of either. We are told that Priam's palace was built of stone, and adorned with polished colonnades. That it was a large building is evident from the fact that there were fifty rooms for the sons of the king, and twelve for the daughters. That the people within the palace were able not only to satisfy the necessary demands of life, but also to enjoy some of its luxuries, may be inferred from a few of the recorded incidents. When Iris went with a message to Helen, she found her weaving into her tapestry 'the battles of horse-taming Trojans and mail-clad Achaians;'[2] when the wailing over Hector reached the ears of Andromache, she was sitting in an inner chamber, embroidering a 'purple web' with 'manifold flowers,' and her handmaids were bidden to heat water over the fire that Hector 'might have warm washing when he came home out of the battle.'[3] The *Odyssey* furnishes many other details; the brazen walls of the palace of Alcinous[4] which have found actual parallel in the roof of the excavated tomb at Orchomenus,[5] the golden and silver hounds which stood on either side of the doorway, the golden figures which held the flaming torches in the hall, the garden with its blossoming fruit-trees, vineyards, and trimly-planted beds; the baths in the palace of Menelaus, the golden and silver vessels, the chairs, the golden distaff, and the silver basket on castors,[6] furnish a picture of luxury which suggests not simply the senseless appropriation of foreign splendor, but the transformation of crude implements and materials into things of beauty. It presents a condition not compatible with the earliest phases of civilization.

[1] *Il.*, vi, 243 ff. [2] *Il.*, iii, 120 ff. [3] *Il.*, xxii, 440 ff.
[4] *Od.*, vii, 84-128. [5] Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 917. [6] *Od.*, iv, 120-135.

## II. *Is the Greek Epic Natural or Artificial?*

Since, then, the Homeric epics are not the product of a primitive but of an advanced condition of society, the question arises whether or not they may be considered popular poems, and, as such, the expression of an artistic tendency which is purely natural. As has been said,[1] epic material sometimes attains a stage of development where it is difficult to determine whether it should be classed under the division of artificial or natural; whether the form in which it appears is due to the influence of the conscious individual artist, or to that of the popular spirit which acted through many minds, and developed unconsciously an embodiment of itself. We encounter this difficulty in studying the Homeric epics.

If they are the work of a conscious artist, by what means have they been preserved through all the centuries? For even in what are considered by some critics as the later portions, the material is older than any other literary monument of Greece.[2] There are two possibilities to be considered: First, that the artist transmitted them orally, and secondly, that he committed them to writing. As to the first, when a work of such magnitude as either of the Homeric epics is transmitted orally, it is necessarily broken into pieces and recited in portions; under such conditions is it likely to retain its original plan, unless there is some means of preserving it as an unaltered whole? We have found[3] that among certain peoples a body of priests or an especial society so jealously guards the poets' creations that they are preserved orally almost as carefully as if they were in written form; but, so far as is known, no such organization existed among the Greeks. The people in general obtained their knowledge of the Homeric poems through the recitation of the wandering rhapsodists,[4] but

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 34.
[2] Cf. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, i, p. 195.
[3] Cf. *supra*, pp. 61, 66, 71 ff.
[4] Bergk, *op. cit.*, p. 211; Jebb, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 ff.

these rhapsodists appeared as individuals, and were not accountable to any body of men for any change or interpolation in the songs recited.[1]

There remains the possibility that the epics were preserved by being written down at the time they were composed, or shortly after; and the conditions of the early Greek civilization are known with sufficient accuracy to warrant the statement that this was possible. We know that the epics must have existed in approximately their present form as early as the seventh or eighth centuries B. C., since the Cyclic poems of that date are largely designed to 'introduce, connect, and complete' the Homeric masterpieces,[2] and this could not have been the case if the epics had not been familiar in a definite, fixed shape. Moreover, the preservation of relatively obscure Cyclic poems from the eighth century[3] points to the use of writing as the means of accounting for their continued existence.

The earliest extant writing in the present Greek script has been preserved on stone, and does not go beyond the seventh century,[4] but since the Greek letters are a modification of the Phoenician,[5] considerable time must have elapsed during which the Greeks were going through the process of adapting the Phoenician characters. The fact that the letters of this early monument are crudely carved proves nothing as to the length of time they had been in use. It suggests that the Greeks may have been unpractised in writing on stone, but this need not imply a like unfamiliarity with the use of softer materials.[6] Such a familiarity seems to be recognized in the celebrated pas-

[1] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, 113 ff.

[2] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, pp. 151 ff. Lawton, *Successors of Homer*, pp. 6 ff.

[3] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

[4] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Bergk, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[5] Bergk, *op. cit.*, pp. 185 ff.

[6] Cf. Bergk, *op. cit.*, pp. 207 ff.

sage of the *Iliad*[1] in which Bellerophon carries 'tokens of woe' 'graved in a folded tablet' to the king of Lycia.[2]

If the Greeks learned the art of writing from the Phoenicians, they had the opportunity to do so before the close of the Mycenaean epoch, for during that period the Phoenicians were carrying on a lively commerce in the Aegean sea, if they had not even then established themselves in permanent colonies on its shores and islands.

Furthermore, there was no question in the mind of Herodotus that the art of writing was known in Homeric times. He has himself seen three inscriptions in verse engraved on some vessels in a temple at Thebes. These inscriptions purported to be a contemporary record of the gift of the vessels to the temple before the Trojan war.[3] While Herodotus can not be considered sufficient authority for fixing the date of the inscriptions, it is significant that he is not deterred from ascribing to them so ancient an origin by any idea of the comparative modernness of writing.

Again, recent discoveries[4] have made clear that a system of writing entirely distinct from the Phoenician was known on Grecian soil during the Mycenaean period. This script has been found in the Dictean cave of Zeus, on a libation table which is demonstrably of the Mycenaean period. At Cnossus also, 'the city of Minos and of Daedalus,' have been found many clay tablets, upon which the inscriptions, Mr. Evans says, are marked by elegance of execution; they show that long before the introduction of the Phoenician alphabet 'this indigenous system had attained a most elaborate development. The inscriptions are the work of practised scribes, following conventional methods and arrangements which point to long traditional usage. Yet

[1] *Il.*, vi, 168 ff.
[2] Cited by Bergk, *op. cit.*, p. 205; Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
[3] Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, i, p. 240.
[4] Evans, *Athenaeum*, May 19, 1900.

this development has been arrived at on independent lines; it is neither Babylonian nor Egyptian, neither Hittite nor Phoenician; it is the work, on Cretan soil, of Aegean people.'

In addition to these tablets, Mr. Evans[1] has found others upon which the inscriptions are partially pictographic and partially made up of purely linear characters, and in these we have probably a distinct step in the evolution of writing from the pre-Mycenaean pictorial signs.[2]

It is not proved by these data that the Homeric epics were written down early in their existence, but the testimony strengthens the possibility that this was the case. The fact that they were made known through the recitations of the rhapsodists is not inconsistent with the possibility that the rhapsodists may have possessed written copies[3] by means of which they kept to the original plan.

Considering, however, that the rhapsodists were not, so far as is known, in any way restrained from interpolating other songs, the epics, even if written down, were not necessarily removed from the plane of popular poetry. The original poems might be so extended and modified that, although the plot remained fundamentally the same, they might yet in form represent the character of popular creations. It is possible that the plan of the earliest artist was such as to make his work peculiarly liable to changes at the hands of those who transmitted it; it is possible, under such circumstances, for the influence of the original author to become secondary to the popular influence.

It seems fair to attempt to estimate the relative strength of these two influences by a comparison of the epics with other products which are known to have been evolved by the national genius. In so far as the general tendency shown in the form of the poems can be seen to parallel the tendency shown in the other products, it is safe to conclude that as

[1] Evans, *ib.*, June 23, 1900.
[2] See Evans, *Jour. Hell. Studies*, 14, pp. 270-372.
[3] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

artistic conceptions they have not risen above the popular ideals. But the form of the political organization, with which we have sought heretofore to parallel that of the epic, must in this instance be determined from the testimony of the poems themselves; and since this is the case, we shall examine first the tendencies exhibited in the Greek language and religion, for in these, as well as in the literature and the political life, is an expression of the people's ideal.

1. At an early epoch, even before their separation from the Italicans,[1] we have an exhibition of a sense for form in the language of the Greeks. As a distinct people 'their first historic deed is the development of the language, and this first deed is an artistic one. For, above all its sister-tongues, the Greek must be regarded as a work of art, on account of the sense prevalent in it for symmetry and perfection of sounds, for transparency of form, for law and organization.'[2]

The language, as we first know it, is a bond of union which holds various tribes together as a nation, and separates them from all other peoples. It is sufficiently one to preserve a common connection between them, while at the same time it is broken up by distinctly marked peculiarities. These peculiarities, while not sufficient to destroy the bond of unity, are sufficient to make independent dialects. As a national expression the language is an exhibition of 'unity in variety;' it conforms to general law but preserves an independence in local development; it is the result of a prevailing tendency towards organization, but this tendency has not been sufficiently strong to draw together closely the elements with which it deals.[3]

2. A similar ideal finds expression in the Greek religion as pictured in the Homeric epics. The gods of various districts have been brought to Olympus and organized into a species of monarchy. They retain their private enmities

[1] Before that time a fixed law for accentuation had been perfected.

[2] Curtius, *Hist. of Greece*, i, p. 32.

[3] Curtius, *ib.*, pp. 33 ff.

and friendships, and form a society in which the individuals are almost on an equality. The result is that Olympus is the home of many contradictory elements, which are, nevertheless, held together in a sort of balance by being subordinated to Zeus as a central divinity. This divinity is recognized as the highest of the gods, and his will ultimately prevails, but he advances by concessions, persuasion, and a nice adjusting of opposing powers; he threatens force only as a last resort; he is 'sore-troubled'[1] lest he be 'set at variance' with Hera, and she does not scruple to provoke him with taunting words, and to upbraid him if he holds himself aloof and gives judgment without consulting her.[2] She beguiles him to slumber on the heights of Ida while Poseidon troubles the Trojans and turns the tide of battle;[3] he meets with haughty resistance from Poseidon, who yields, but warns him of the 'inappeasable wrath' of the gods if he spare Troy against their desire.[4] Each of the individual gods has his will, and pursues his aims independent of the others, or in opposition to them or to the chief of the gods, although in the end he brings himself into accord with the chief. This recognition of the authority of Zeus does not conceal the fact that he is dealing with opposing elements; while he is the central power, presiding over Olympus, his interference is not desired, or cordially received, in those matters to which individual gods have especially directed their attention. His position shows a general correspondence to that of Agamemnon, leader of the forces of the Greeks.[5]

3. Turning to the political constitution of the Greeks as outlined in the *Iliad*, we find that in yet other ways it is very similar to the divine constitution of Olympus. The form of government is one in which a leader is recognized, but his power is far from absolute. The league over which he presides is represented as national. The Greek kings have assembled that they may avenge an insult offered

[1] *Il.*, i, 518 ff. [2] *Il.*, i, 541 ff. [3] *Il.*, xiv, 352 ff.
[4] *Il.*, xv, 205-217. [5] Cf. *infra*, p. 140.

to one of their number. There is an inward recognition on the part of these individual chiefs of the necessity of a directing head; the result is that they voluntarily subject themselves to the leadership of Agamemnon. But while this union bound them to the accomplishment of one particular end, their independence in other directions remained inviolate. We hear, on the one hand, Odysseus speaking to the turbulent Greeks:[1] 'In no wise can we Achaians all be kings here. A multitude of masters is no good thing; let there be one master, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counselling Kronos hath granted it;' this 'master' is the commander of the army; it is his province to divide the hosts into tribes and clans, that he may know who is a coward and who is a brave man;[2] he is the leader in the public sacrifices, slaying the victim and offering the prayer;[3] he presides over the council of the elders and the public assembly;[4] he receives the lion's share of the spoils;[5] his importance is emphasized by many marks of honor. But, on the other hand, although leader in the war, he can not compel service; Achilles refrains from forcible resistance when deprived of his 'meed of honor,'[6] but exercises his right of withdrawing from the struggle; he refuses to be appeased when Agamemnon makes most generous offers of restitution;[7] he does not protest against the 'far ampler meed' of Agamemnon, but he is tenaciously mindful of his right to 'some small thing,' yet his 'own.'

The council of nobles has every claim to attention and respect; they sit in judgment upon the actions of the leader, while bringing their own into a certain conformity to his wishes.

The assembly of the common people expresses approval or disapproval of the judgment of the nobles, and the freedom with which Thersites[9] chatters on, 'reviling Aga-

[1] *Il.*, ii, 203-206. [2] *Il.*, ii, 362 ff. [3] *Il.*, ii, 410 ff.; xix, 250 ff.
[4] Cf. *Il.*, ii, 55 ff.; *ib.*, 100 ff. [5] *Il.*, i, 166 ff. [6] *Il.*, i, 335 ff.
[7] *Il.*, ix, 120 ff. [8] *Il.*, i, 275 ff. [9] *Il.*, ii, 212 ff.

memnon,' points to a sense of independence among the lower classes. He is chastised and silenced by Odysseus, but his outspoken upbraidings are not an indication of a serf-like condition.

The political life portrayed in the *Odyssey* is that which prevailed in a particular kingdom. The system of organization is the same, however, as that given in the *Iliad;* there is a king or head, a council of nobles, and an assembly of common people. If there is any difference in the political constitution depicted in the two poems, it lies in a lessening of respect shown in the *Odyssey* for royal authority. There is a slight change in the relations of the different classes. While the hereditary right of Telemachus is acknowledged, it does not seem sufficient to assure him of the succession.[1] Moreover, the assembly is more active in the *Odyssey*[2] than in the *Iliad.* There appears to be a tendency towards greater independence on the part both of nobles and people. If sufficient explanation for this difference lies in the long absence of the king, we have then a political condition in the *Odyssey* similar to that in the *Iliad;* but if not so explained, we have a more anarchistic condition presented as the embodiment of the people's ideal in political form. In either case, the literary expression of that ideal in the *Odyssey* should not show a greater tendency towards unity than is exhibited in the plan of the *Iliad.*

We have seen that in language, religion, and political life, the Greeks showed a regard for organization, but for an organization of so general a character that the members were but loosely connected. This national characteristic should be of value in deciding upon the popular or artificial nature of the Homeric epics, since if they are popular creations, we can not expect in them a stronger inclination towards unity than in the other manifestations of the

[1] *Od.,* i, 387; cf. Gladstone, *Hom. Stud.,* iii, 51; Jebb, *op. cit.,* p, 49, note 3.

[2] *Od.,* ii, 240 ff.; xxiv, 420 ff.

national spirit. In studying the epics to determine the character of the unity they exhibit, we find such a difference in their structural organization that they must be considered separately.

4. In the *Iliad* the plot does not aim at the absolute elevation of a single individual. Achilles is the first and greatest of the heroes, but, as the poem stands, he disappears at the end of the first book, and does not reappear until the ninth. Again he enters in the eleventh, and then not until the sixteenth, when he practically leads the action until the end. Moreover, even in the books where he is unmistakably the hero, he does not overshadow by his greatness the individuality of the other characters.

The plan of the poem is elastic; while Achilles sulked in his tent he gave liberty to the other warriors to carry on their individual struggles with the Trojans; this arrangement gave to the rhapsodists the opportunity of indulging the local pride of their hearers by the celebration of heroes from the various kingdoms of Greece. But the incidents through which these various heroes are introduced can not be said to be essential to the progress of the story, or to exist in a close organic relation to it. The plot of the *Iliad*, so far as indicated in the first book,[1] contains the following events: Achilles is wronged by Agamemnon and withdraws from the struggle against the Trojans; his mother, Thetis, appeals to Zeus, who promises to avenge her son by giving temporary success to the Trojans; so far, the plan would be satisfied by passing directly from the first to the eleventh book. In that book the discomfiture of the Greeks is accomplished, and then, going on to the sixteenth, we find the unfolding of the motive which draws Achilles back into the struggle, and brings about the death of Hector in the twenty-second.

Whether or not these books embrace the material of an original *Iliad*, the work of an individual author, they show a coherent progress to which each element is essential.

[1] Cf. Jebb, *op cit.*, pp. 158 ff.

Moreover, if the poem was turned over in this form to the rhapsodists, it offered abundant opportunity for complications and additions, while still preserving the outlines of the original structure.

The detached character of the incidents that intervene between the points indicated, as well as the internal evidence of language and style,[1] are witnesses to the extension of plot and to the plurality of authorship by which the poem attained its present form.

Even a superficial examination of the *Iliad* as it stands reveals an imperfect articulation of its parts. For example,[2] the military reverses of the Greeks promised by Zeus in the first book, are delayed through the additions of the intervening books up to the eighth; the eighth is clearly preliminary to the ninth, where Achilles refuses the peace-offering of Agamemnon, since in the eighth is the necessary explanation for Agamemnon's conciliatory attitude. But in the sixteenth Achilles is ignorant of any offer having been made by Agamemnon, for he sends Patroclus[3] into the battle, bidding him win honor and fame, that the Greeks may give back again 'the fairest maiden, and thereto add splendid gifts.' The inference is that books viii and ix were a later addition, which came in while the enlargement of the poem was in progress. In like manner also, book x, which stands in no close relation to what precedes or follows, books xii, xiii, xiv and xv, which extend the descriptions of the Trojan attack and the Greek defense, serve to delay the progress of the action, and have no essential connection with the plot. Books xxiii and xxiv, whatever their inherent interest may be, serve rather to dissipate the strength of the action than to concentrate it upon a definite end. One is conscious that the wrath of Achilles has reached a climax in the 'foul entreatment of noble Hector,' and yet the fact that the Grecian army is left encamped about the walls of the

[1] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
[2] Cf. Jebb, *op. cit.*, pp. 159 ff.
[3] *Il.*, xvi, 84 ff.

yet unconquered city, produces a sense of incompleteness. In the second book[1] Odysseus had reminded the people of the portent which Calchas had interpreted for them when the ships were gathering in Aulis; the blood-red snake, which had feasted on the eight young sparrows and their mother, was the basis for his prophecy that for nine years the Greeks should war about Troy, but in the tenth they should take the city. The prowess of Achilles seems to fall short of the end which we are led to expect, while yet this prophecy is unfulfilled. The lengthening of the poem into the twenty-fourth book increases the sense of incompleteness; for twelve days the battle is delayed while they hold funeral for Hector, and watchers are placed about his barrow lest the Greeks make onset before the time, and at this point the story is abandoned. The opportunity is open for still further extension and dilution; the effect is negative, for the end is only partially attained.

The result of the introduction of these retarding and extending elements is to weaken the framework of the poem, so that as it stands it shows a loose bond of unity. The influence of many minds upon it is more apparent than the influence of one; consequently if there was, as seems probable, an original *Iliad,* planned and wrought out by an individual artist from cycles of song well-known to the people, its subsequent expansions and extensions have given it, so far as concerns its unity, the character of a popular poem. Further, we find that the nature of the unity is in harmony with that shown in other popular creations of the Greeks.[2]

5. Corresponding to the national ideal as depicted in the political life of the *Odyssey*, we should expect to find the poem either an equally unified piece of literature with the *Iliad,* or less unified; but we find that, structurally, it represents neither of these conditions. The fusion of the songs which enter into it is less apparent than in the *Iliad.* It has undoubtedly brought together separate legends and tradi-

[1] 304 ff. [2] Cf. *supra,* pp. 138 ff.

tions, and it is at least highly probable[1] that this material came from different places and periods; but the poem bears the mark of a conscious planning, as the *Iliad* does not; its plot is more complicated, and requires more care in the fitting together of its parts than that of the *Iliad;* if it dealt only with the straightforward current of Odysseus' adventures, its biographical character would naturally promote the unity, but the adventures of Telemachus form a parallel action with those of Odysseus. The situation is made clear in the first book. We see Odysseus detained by Calypso, but longing for his own land; his faithful wife at home is besieged by lawless suitors, and his son, heavy-hearted, sees his possessions wasted by the unwelcome guests. We are introduced into a council of the gods where it is decided that the time has arrived when Odysseus shall return to his home. Hermes is to be sent to release him, while Athene goes to Ithaca to stir up Telemachus to search for his father. Then follow[2] the adventures of Telemachus, starting with the mockery of the suitors before the assembly of the people, and continuing through his visit to the wise Nestor of Pylos, and to Menelaus of Sparta, the last-returned of the Greeks, where he learns that his father is in Calypso's isle; then Telemachus prepares to return to Ithaca. We go back[3] to the council of the gods and see Hermes speeding on his errand to Calypso, and the adventures of Odysseus begin; they bring him eventually to Ithaca, where a little[4] later Telemachus arrives from Lacedaemon, and the father and son meet at the dwelling of the swineherd Eumaeus, and form a plan for the slaying of the suitors. From this time the two actions become one, and it progresses directly to the slaughter of the suitors and the reunion of Odysseus with his wife and his father. There are no loose ends left to the threads of the plot; the shades of the suitors are conducted to Hades,

[1] Cf. Kirchoff, *Die Homerische Odyssee.*
[2] Bks. ii, iii, iv. [3] Bk. v. [4] Bk. xv.

and Athene establishes peace between Odysseus and the people of Ithaca.

In the adventures of Telemachus in search of his father, and in the recital of Odysseus at the court of Alcinous, there is opportunity for extension within the lines of the poem as at present laid down, but the fact that at these points the incidents are neither unduly prolonged nor multiplied presents a striking contrast with the use that was made of like opportunities in the *Iliad*. The series of stories, which might have been continued indefinitely in the *Odyssey*, seems to have been limited by an artistic sense of proportion. The chance was there to extend the plot, but the resulting poem differs sufficiently from the *Iliad* to imply that a different influence had prevailed in its construction. The conception of a plot of so intricate a character must be sought in the mind of a single individual; that its parts remained so perfectly articulated would seem to indicate that the influence of the individual had continued predominant. This being the case, the *Odyssey* becomes the manifestation of an artist's personal ideal, and not the creation of the people as a body. Moreover, the popular ideal as it appears in the form of language, religion, and government does not show the finish and completeness of organization exhibited in the structure of the *Odyssey*, while it does correspond to the unity attained by the *Iliad*. The conclusion reached by this process of comparison is that, although both poems lie on the borders of the natural and the artificial epic zones, the *Iliad* belongs more distinctly to the former, and the *Odyssey* to the latter.

To conclude: The distinctive mark of the epic upon which all critics are agreed is its narrative character. Accepting this universally conceded quality as a starting-point, we find that we must go backward to the beginnings of literature in order to find the beginnings of epic, since narrative, lyric, and dramatic elements exist together in the earliest recorded songs.

By following the narrative along the line of its development, we find that its form is defined under the influences which produce a clearly defined national government; that it, as well as the government, shows in its form a realization of the national genius; and that according to the tendencies of that genius, it appears as prose or verse, in dissociated sagas or in more or less unified national songs.

In view of these conclusions, it would seem that whatever may be the arbitrary limits within which the term epic is applied, the narrative within those limits is only a phase in the development of a literary species, and should be studied in its relation both to preceding and to later growth.

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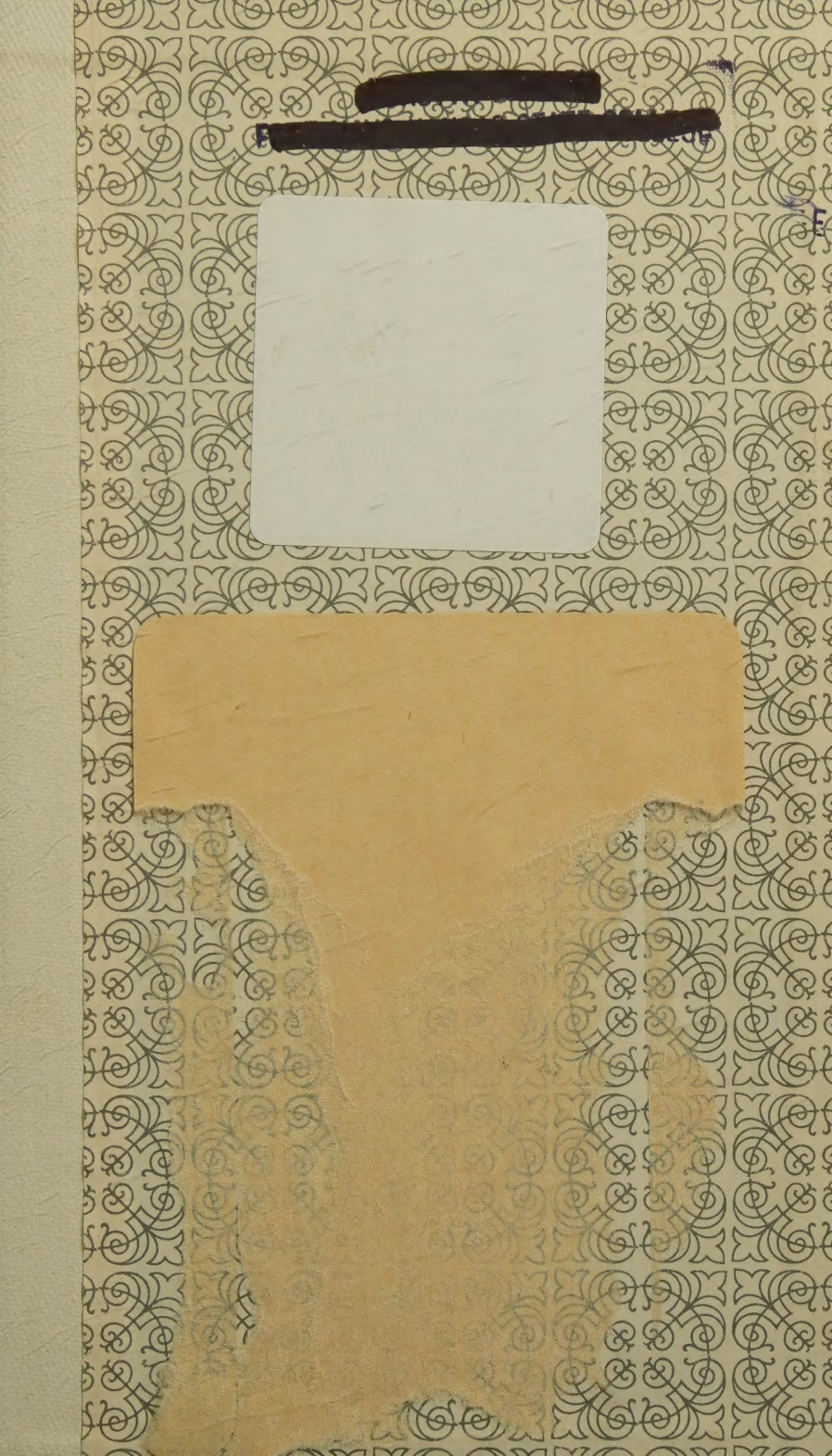

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